

INTERNATIONAL

SOUTH AFRICA PRESIDENT OPENS PARLIAMENT FOR LAST TIME

Mandela in attack on racial hatred

By Victor Mallet in Cape Town

President Nelson Mandela of South Africa, in his last State of the Nation address before he retires, yesterday lamented continuing tensions between blacks and whites five years after the end of apartheid. He called for a "new patriotism" and said his citizens were still murdering each other in "words and attitudes".

"We slaughter one another in the stereotypes and mistrust that linger in our heads, and the words of hate we spew from our lips," said Mr Mandela, who has dedicated his life to racial reconciliation.

The president was launching the last parliamentary session before this year's general election - the second non-racial national vote in South African history. In the prepared text of his speech, he said the election would be held between May 18 and 27, but he omitted the passage when he spoke because of a constitu-

tional technicality forbidding him to set an official date yet.

Mr Mandela praised some of the achievements of his African National Congress government since it came to power in 1994, including the supply of water, electricity, houses and telephones to millions of previously deprived South Africans.

But he also accepted that the ANC had failed to solve severe problems such as violent crime, corruption - which made South Africa a "sick society" - and unemployment.

"The steady progress of the past few years has laid the foundation for greater achievements. But the reality is that we can do much better," he said. "The long walk is not yet over. The prize of a better life has yet to be won."

His address was greeted by enthusiastic clapping and singing from ANC members of parliament. Even opposition leaders paid tribute to Mr Mandela, 80, who will



Mandela pauses during his address to parliament yesterday Reuters

step down after the election and be replaced by Thabo Mbeki, his deputy. But they criticised the speech for its lack of concrete measures to tackle crime, improve education or create jobs.

Marthinus van Schalkwyk, leader of the New National party, said it was a "speech of broken promises". Roelf Meyer of the United Democratic Movement said it seemed the ANC government "was not offering the bold and decisive measures that South Africans are yearning for".

There was more bad news on crime for South Africa yesterday when James Bartleman, Canadian high commissioner, was assaulted and robbed by an intruder in his Cape Town hotel room. He had been due to attend Mr Mandela's speech. On Tuesday the South Korean head of Daewoo's operations in South Africa was shot dead in Johannesburg, probably in a botched car hijacking.

Mr Mandela said South Africans were right to be yearning for a better life. He condemned as terrorism the bomb attacks and shooting carried out in recent months by fundamentalist Moslems. "What is undertaken as an expression of militancy could now very easily provide cover for rightwing counter-revolution against the new South Africa," he said.

Impatient and dissatisfied with crime-fighting efforts, but he criticised what he called deliberate efforts to sensationalise and politicise the issue. "We can and shall break out of this bog."

He condemned as terrorism the bomb attacks and

Gephardt clears way for a Gore tilt at the presidency

Vice-president is in position of unrivalled strength in race to be Democrats' candidate next year, writes Gerard Baker

While President Bill Clinton this week wriggled a little closer to freedom from the threat of ignominious removal from office, his vice-president took a giant leap towards succeeding Mr Clinton when he eventually leaves the White House in two years' time.

On Wednesday, Richard Gephardt, the principal potential challenger to Mr Gore for the Democratic party's nomination for the 2000 presidential election, announced he would not be running after all. The two men enjoyed a friendly breakfast together at the White House, where Mr Gephardt explained he would be concentrating instead on winning back for his party control of the House of Representatives, lost in 1988 and 1992, but has not yet ruled out a run. A Jackson campaign would be well funded, but would probably run into the same problems as his earlier attempts.

The other possible candidate is John Kerry, another moderate senator, this time from Massachusetts, who also has no money problems but will have difficulty staking out a strong position if he does not announce soon.

With a year to go to the first primary, then, Mr Gore already seems to have the nomination wrapped up. Is there anything that could go wrong?

Though famously wooden

in manner, Mr Gore has already proved himself a formidable candidate. Even though he is the incumbent vice-president - a position from which only one candidate has failed to win the party's nomination in the last 60 years - he has left nothing to chance.

He has assiduously courted the big constituencies and the crucial states. Indeed, it is his position of unrivalled strength that has put off so many other candidates. Barring some unforeseen scandal or sudden economic downturn in the next year, Mr Gore will be the Democrat candidate.

More importantly, the events of the last week also strengthen his prospects in the ensuing election in November 2000. Mr Gephardt's decision to withdraw spares the Democrats a potentially damaging fight along some important fault lines.

Instead the chances are that a famously fractious party will unite quickly around Mr Gore at an unusually early stage in the electoral cycle.

The other cannot be said for the Republicans. Their bruising battle over impeachment will be followed by what is shaping up to be a bitter struggle for the party's nomination between moderates and social and religious conservatives. While they slug it out, Mr Gore will look increasingly presidential, long before the real contest begins.

Farmers reap benefits from Real fall

By John Barham
in Ribeirão Preto

Three chubby farmers sporting baseball caps grin with excitement as they squeeze into the cab of a new top-of-the range Ford F250 pick-up.

The pick-up is parked outside Marco Antonio Ortolan's Ford showroom in the lush farming town of São Paulo in the heart of one of Brazil's richest agricultural regions.

Mr Ortolan says business is uncommonly good. Sales of luxury vehicles such as the F250 have taken off since the Real, Brazil's currency, began to slide on January 13.

The 30 per cent fall in its value has meant that farmers - who sell their oranges, coffee and sugar in dollars - now have that much more when they turn their export income into Reals.

Before January 13, anyone wanting a Ford F250 had to raise the Real equivalent of \$40,000. Now \$26,000 from farm exports secures a vehicle.

"People want top-of-the-range models," says Mr Ortolan. "The first of the 15 pickup I sold recently were the most expensive ones." Now he is out of stock.

For rural Brazil, the advent of the Real in 1986 brought a period of rising debts and high interest

rates, low producer prices and rising wages for farm workers. Farmers complained that price stability was built on an overvalued exchange rate and low food prices.

João Pedro Matta, a director of Coopercitrus, a big farm co-operative, says "agriculture was at the bottom of the pit. We have suffered enough. Now people are more hopeful."

The harvest starts soon, so the expected tidal wave of money has yet to arrive in full. Many people are complaining that the cost of basic inputs such as fertiliser is already beginning to rise in anticipation of the bonanza. Everyone is keep-

ing fingers crossed that the Real will not recover.

Farming is big business in Brazil. Last year farmers accounted for \$17.23bn of exports, a third of the total.

The wealth generated by farmers in north-western São Paulo state has created one of Brazil's most affluent regions, Ribeirão Preto, the largest city in the area with a population of 500,000, links itself to a Californian metropolis, even if it is a six-hour drive to the beach. The city has six universities, 11 hospitals and is building a vast new shopping mall.

But the last few years have treated the city harshly, at least by its pampered standards.

Fox among chickens, Page 7

Alberto Borges Matias, an economics professor and business consultant in the city, says "incomes here are \$5,800 a year, well above the national average". But companies and farms are deeply indebted: "Average debts are equivalent to 150 per cent of equity, twice the national average. This is why everyone is euphoric over [devaluation]."

Those lucky or wise enough to escape the debt trap are buying land to plant more orange groves and coffee bushes. And Mr Ortolan is looking forward to more visits from farmers keen to buy pick-ups.

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BRITAIN

LABOUR MARKET SURVEY FINDS RATE OF GROWTH IN WAGES AT WEAKEST LEVEL FOR 16 MONTHS

Pay demands ease as job cuts accelerate

By Richard Adams,
Economics Staff

New figures on the labour market - delivered to the Bank of England before Thursday's deep cut in interest rates - show job losses accelerating and pay demands easing.

The report by the Federation of Recruitment and Employment Services was submitted to the Bank's monetary policy committee during its meeting this week, and backs up the committee's decision to cut rates

by half a percentage point.

"In virtually all sectors there has been a sharp rise in the availability of labour, in part due to redundancies in the City [of London] and manufacturing," said Chris Williamson of NTC Research, which conducted the federation's monthly survey.

The number of jobs offered in national newspaper advertisements was down 11 per cent in December compared with last year. "This represents the sharpest rate of contraction recorded for

almost six years," the report noted.

Recruitment consultancies also reported a fall in demand for permanent, temporary and contract staff in January.

With fewer positions being chased by a growing number of jobless, the pressure has been taken off wages. The survey showed the rate of growth in pay for permanent and temporary staff at its weakest for 16 months.

And the number of job advertisements targeted at recent university graduates

- typically entry level management or trainee jobs - fell sharply in December to 42 per cent below the levels of the previous year. During the fourth quarter, graduate job adverts were 25 per cent lower than a year before.

"The low levels of these indicators are good news for inflation," Mr Williamson said.

The report's results are another symptom of the economic slowdown that has led the Bank to cut interest rates in the past five months, from 7.50 per cent in October to 5.50 per cent this month.

Since the official statistics for average earnings were suspended in November, the Bank has increasingly relied on employers' surveys for a picture of labour market pressures. The federation's report agrees with earlier surveys of manufacturing and service sectors, all showing job losses.

The survey also uncovered evidence of a sudden increase in public sector jobs. "The public sector is recruiting at a very strong

rate," Mr Williamson said. While advertisements for private sector jobs fell 14 per cent in January, the number of public sector jobs in the national press grew by 10 per cent.

But Gordon Brown, the chancellor of the exchequer, yesterday pledged to continue his "tough approach" to the public finances, despite pressure to increase public sector pay in the Budget next month. Mr Brown said the Budget's priorities would be "enterprise, work and the family".

Blair gives warning to Scottish voters on nationalists

By James Buxton
in Edinburgh

Tony Blair, the UK prime minister, yesterday made his strongest attack so far on the Scottish National party and its policy of independence for Scotland, saying voters had a choice between devolution and divorce from the UK.

Campaigning in Glasgow for his Labour party in the Scottish parliament elections, he said: "On May 7, one of two things will happen. Scottish New Labour will go to work for a stronger health service, better schools and a prosperous economy. Or the SNP will file for divorce from the rest of Britain."

He underlined the theme of divorce by unveiling a campaign poster which, in huge headlines, stated: "Divorce is an expensive business. It won't be a trial separation with the rest of the UK government for aid."

Rover executives say it demonstrates that the project could be undertaken via and more cheaply outside the EU. Only by doing so can BMW stand a chance of securing the £150m-200m government aid it believes should be possible for re-creating Longbridge.

The effect on Rover's workforce morale was last night unmistakable. As they struggled out of the gate from the morning shift the Longbridge men seemed weary of yet another bout of speculation over their future. "We've heard it all before, haven't we?" said one worker.

NEWS DIGEST

MOTOR INDUSTRY

Car number plate reform changes buying patterns

The introduction of a twice-yearly car number plate change, which will see a T prefix appear on March 1 and V on September 1, is already causing a significant shift in car-buying patterns, according to registration statistics for January. New prefixes were previously released once a year, every August. A 21.6 per cent fall in new-car registrations in January, one of the biggest year-on-year falls for a single month, was largely a reaction to the change and was "the cause for alarm", said the Retail Motor Industry Federation, which represents most franchised retail motor traders. Some decline compared with January last year was expected, because January 1998 registrations were a record 232,055 due mainly to windfall payments from demutualised savings institutions. But industry analysts suggested more than half the fall was attributable to the number-plate change. The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, which issued the statistics, expects the decline to continue in February as more buyers wait for the T plate. September is expected to produce a second peak as the V is introduced. John Griffiths, London

PRIVATISED RAIL COMPANIES

Operators braced for criticism

Privatised train operating companies are bracing themselves for a wave of criticism from ministers and passengers' groups when rail performance figures are published on Thursday. But the companies are also highly critical of the decision by John O'Brien, the rail franchising director, to introduce a system of grading company performance that they say will penalise good operators. One senior rail manager warned yesterday there could be no return to the performance levels of two years ago until there was massive investment in expanding rail capacity. The performance figures, for the three months to mid-December, are expected to show a further decline in the punctuality and reliability of many of the 25 train companies compared with the same period of 1997.

The data will set the tone for a rail "summit" with John Prescott, deputy prime minister and chief transport minister, on February 25. Charles Bateholt, London

TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Private sector 'to surge'

Private "knowledge" companies are set to capture a significant slice of the UK's £60bn (\$98bn) education and training market, according to a report by Capital Strategies, an independent corporate finance house. The forecast is based on a new share price index, launched today by the company, that tracks the 18 UK quoted companies deriving a substantial income from the education and training sectors. The index, the first of its kind in the UK, has outperformed the main market indices for the past three years. It comes as Surrey County Council moves closer to becoming the first local authority to hand over control of a failing state school to the private sector by naming a preferred bidder next week for the lucrative contract.

Government policy is promoting private sector partnerships with schools. This is generating speculation that there will be a US-style education and training boom. The private sector share of the \$635bn (£387bn) education and training market in the US is expected to double to 25 per cent over the next 20 years. Simon Targett, London

POLITICS

Senior lord quits over 'conflict'

A senior lord from the pro-European Liberal Democrat party who has links to the prime minister's office is to quit his party's front bench in the House of Lords after the opposition Conservatives claimed there was a conflict of interest with his new job at the Independent Television Commission watchdog. Lord Holme of Cheltenham told the Financial Times yesterday he would step down as a frontbench spokesman on Northern Ireland. Lord Holme took up the three-year £19,000 (\$31,100) a year post at the beginning of the week. He has played a leading role in the development of "Lib-Lab" relations and has close links to Tony Blair, the prime minister, and Peter Mandelson, former chief trade minister. Cathy Newman, London

ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT

Minister reassures companies

Stephen Byers, chief trade and industry minister, has ordered his department to maintain an open-door policy towards companies involved in bids, amid concern about a crackdown on access to ministers and officials. Mr Byers has made clear there should be no tightening of rules designed to avoid potential conflicts with the Department of Trade and Industry's role in scrutinising merger decisions. Underlining his open approach, Mr Byers will visit British Aerospace's plant in north-west England on Monday - despite the fact that BAE's purchase of Marconi is being examined by competition authorities. He has accepted BAE's invitation to the celebration of the 2,000th Airbus wing, on condition that executives do not raise matters relevant to the merger. David Wighton, London

Bulldozers drive to bury feelings of doom at Rover plant

John Griffiths looks at the growing disparity between plant's future and what is happening on the ground

While the supervisory board of BMW was preparing in Munich to replace Bernd Pischetsrieder, chairman and architect of the purchase of loss-making Rover Group five years ago, bulldozers could be seen at work yesterday at Rover's Longbridge plant in the English Midlands.

Given the fever of speculation in UK and German media that Mr Pischetsrieder would be forced to quit and Longbridge to close, an observer of the bulldozers might have concluded that sentence was already being carried out.

In fact, the bulldozers are clearing part of Longbridge, Rover's biggest plant, for the £400m project that will result in an all-new Mini emerging from an essentially new production facility at the end of 2000.

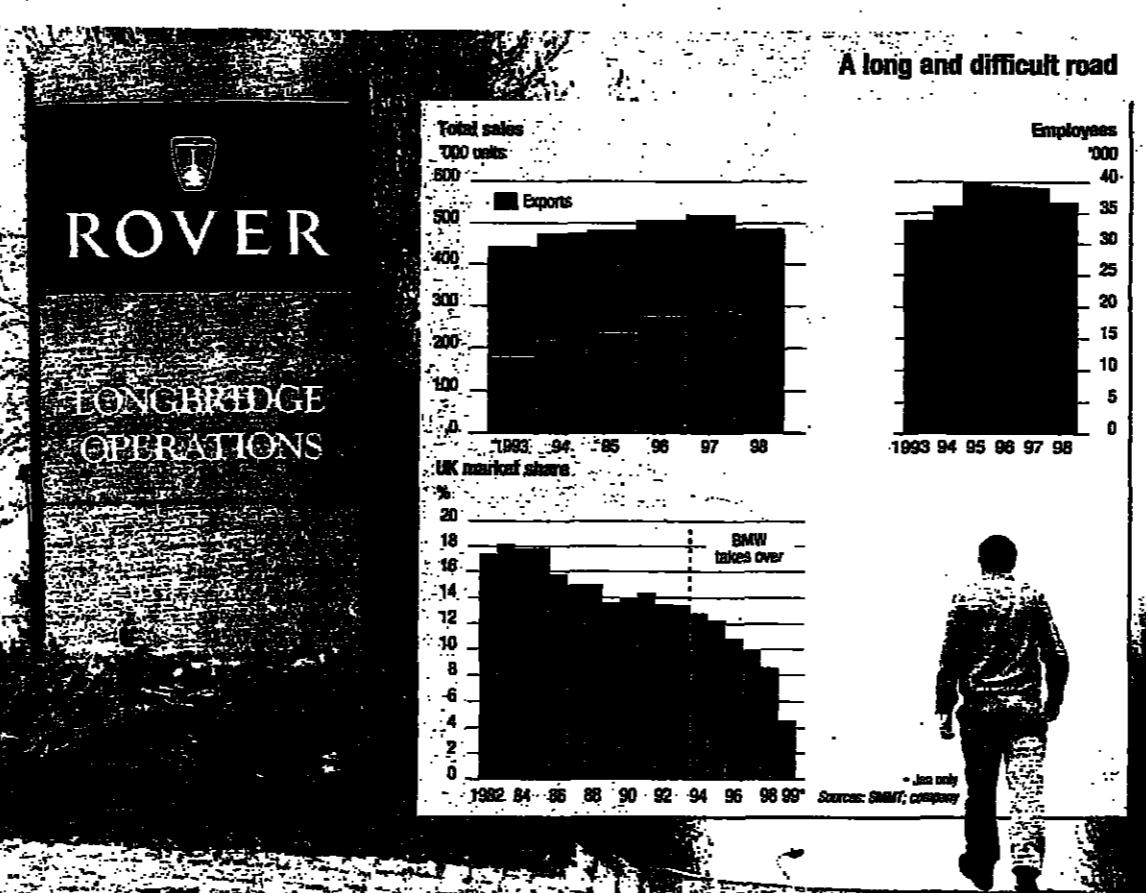
Inside the main assembly lines, preparatory work is going ahead for production in the second half of this year of the "Oyster" and "Jewel" projects - revised versions of Rover's 200 and 400 models. These slow-selling cars are the biggest volume cars produced at Rover's biggest plant, and thus the source of many of its problems.

Elsewhere, design and production engineers are addressing the manufacturing adjustments needed for the updated version of Rover's MGF sports car, also destined to hit the market within the next year. All have been signed off by Mr Pischetsrieder alone but the entire BMW board.

There is an increasing disparity between what is happening on the ground and a now widely held public perception that doom is hanging over Longbridge.

BMW's decision yesterday to put Joachim Milberg in Mr Pischetsrieder's place, should give the doomsayers pause for second thought. They had expected the job to go to Wolfgang Reitzle, Mr Pischetsrieder's official deputy, former Rover chairman and, until his own forced departure last night, Mr Pischetsrieder's fiercest critic and rival.

However, Mr Milberg, whose own career path has been through BMW's engineering side, is described as a low-key pragmatist well



suitied to bring to a close the chapter of bitter rivalry between Mr Reitzle and Mr Pischetsrieder seen as having had a negative effect on plotting an orderly course for Rover. Mr Reitzle is known to have had less enthusiasm for keeping Rover's manufacturing operations intact than Mr Pischetsrieder, whose strong line of demand.

Its problems are worse inside the UK than outside. Lost in the uproar of the past few days was the news that Rover's worldwide sales last year, at 487,700, were only a small step down.

Within the next month to six weeks the board of BMW, Rover's parent, will make the final decision on where and when the replacements for Rover's 200 and 400 ranges - the main vehicles produced at Longbridge - will be built.

The decision will be made in the light of a comprehensive study of alternative, cheaper countries in which to build the new models,

including central European countries such as Hungary. The study is essential and explains why a decision has yet to be made and no approach so far made to the UK government for aid.

Rover executives say it demonstrates that the project could be undertaken via and more cheaply outside the EU. Only by doing so can BMW stand a chance of securing the £150m-200m government aid it believes should be possible for re-creating Longbridge.

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Dublin urged to prevent IRA gang's early release

By John Murray Brown
in Dublin

The Irish government faced public calls yesterday to deny early release for a four-man Irish Republican Army gang sentenced for the manslaughter of an Irish police man in 1998.

Pearse McAuley, Kevin Walsh, Michael O'Neill and Jeremiah Sheehy received sentences in Dublin's no-jury special criminal court ranging from 11 to 14 years for killing Jerry McCabe, the Irish detective shot dead during a botched IRA postal robbery in County Limerick.

The verdict was attacked by police and opposition parties after witness intimidation forced the state to change its murder charge to manslaughter in controversial plea bargaining.

A police spokesman said: "If the Taoiseach [prime minister] does not act, we will be unable to function as a police force. We cannot go

out there and be soft targets for people to murder us."

The case is further evidence of the IRA's capacity to thwart the course of justice, despite the Good Friday peace accord, which binds all political parties to renounce the use of violence in pursuit of political ends.

The men could have faced a mandatory 40 years for murder. If they make use of the provision for early remission in last year's peace agreement, they would be released in three years, according to legal experts.

In a measure of public disquiet over the case, Bertie Ahern, Irish prime minister, said: "Mr McCabe was murdered as far as I am concerned." He insisted the gang would not benefit from the Good Friday agreement. "Our understanding and interpretation of the agreement and legal advice about it, is that what I have said is correct: these people will serve their sentence."

In sentencing, the judge said there was no evidence to confirm who fired the gun - a semi-automatic Kalashnikov.

A debate on the case will be held in the Irish parliament next week. Opposition parties, which have criticised the Irish government's stance, are expected to seize on yesterday's assertion by Martin McGuinness, the Sinn Fein chief negotiator, that they would make use of the early release provision.

And Nora Owen, deputy leader of the opposition Fine Gael party, said: "I want Mr Ahern to make it clear to Sinn Fein that this is not a bargaining chip they can bring forward."

Mr McAuley, who escaped from London's Brixton jail in 1991, was released during the IRA ceasefire in 1994, before being re-arrested in connection with Mr McCabe's killing while on bail related to his UK extradition case.

There were 72 punishment shootings in 1997 and 1998 against 24 in 1996.

The number of shootings fell sharply after the ceasefire. However, terrorists reverted to beatings and

assaults, often with baseball bats and cudgels, which inflicted serious injuries. In 1995 there were three recorded shootings. The number of assaults and beatings rose from 217 to 302 in 1996 and fell to 156 in 1997 and 141 in 1998.

Ronnie Flanagan, the RUC chief constable, blamed the IRA and the UVF and UDA, the main pro-British groups, for the attacks. Police pointed out that during President Bill Clinton's visit and last year's assembly elections the terrorist leadership was able to halt attacks.

Families Against Intimidation and Terror said the IRA was seeking to control its community and demonstrate the RUC's inability to provide acceptable policing in nationalist areas.

Martin McGuinness, chief negotiator for Sinn Fein, the IRA's political wing, yesterday called for an end to the attacks but said this was unlikely.

No quorum of shares present or represented at the Meeting is required in order to deliberate validly on the agenda. A decision in favour of the Resolution no. 1 of the agenda must be approved by Shareholders holding at least 50% of the shares represented at the Meeting.

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NOTICE OF ADJOURNED EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

Tell-tale legacy of unsafe sex in the city

By Nicholas Timmins,
Public Policy Editor

You always knew the office Christmas party was hazardous - office sex, wrecked working relationships, fractured partnerships and impending divorce.

But now there is proof. More people seek abortions and HIV tests in the first few months of the year, than at any other time, a study by specialists at the London

School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine has shown.

Treatment for sexually transmitted diseases rises, and, nine months after the Christmas holiday, the birth rate peaks, with births out-side marriage reaching an even higher level.

To cap it all, condom sales reach an "acute peak" just before Christmas. Kaye Wellings and her colleagues note in the Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine.

calendar, which puts Christmas later, births peak in October, while in France births peak in May, nine months after the long August holiday.

Christmas, the authors note, offers "increased opportunities for socialising and a generally more hedonistic approach to life" - which, translated out of academe presumably means drink, drugs, sex and rock and roll. Absolutely.

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Saturday February 6 1999

Heads in the euro-sand

This week the Bank of England cut UK short-term interest rates by half a percentage point to 5.5 per cent. No such cut was forthcoming from policymakers at the European Central Bank, which chose to maintain its interest rate at 3 per cent.

This was the level established in early December when nine central banks made a co-ordinated downward move in preparation for European economic and monetary union. Yet there has been a marked deterioration in the European economy since then. How long before the Americans, never slow to adopt megaphone diplomacy in international economic relations, start complaining that Europe is failing to pull its weight?

The US could certainly muster a powerful case. In trade terms it has borne most of the brunt of the Asian economic crisis by acting as the world's consumer and spender of last resort. The cost has been a big deterioration in the external account.

The OECD projects that the US current account deficit will rise this year from \$229bn to \$272bn, equivalent to 3.1 per cent of gross domestic product. Many private sector forecasters are more pessimistic, expecting the deficit to come out closer to 4 per cent.

In contrast the countries of the euro-zone are running a current account surplus equivalent to 1.2 per cent of their combined GDP. This acts as a brake on global economic growth. Given the strength of the European economy when compared with Asia, such behaviour appears perverse to the point of irresponsibility.

The US could reasonably argue that it would be in Europe's own interest to adopt a more expansionary policy when inflationary pressures are minimal, unemployment remains high and the continental European economies are running at well below capacity. Why then is the ECB holding fire on interest rate cuts? And why are governments in the euro zone proposing to tighten fiscal policy this year?

Stoke up inflation

As far as the ECB is concerned, its mandate simply precludes demand management: the central objective in its constitution is price stability. The policymakers on its council tend anyway to believe that European problems such as high unemployment are structural. Without labour market flexibility, they claim, looser policy would do less to stimulate demand than stoke up inflation.

There is undoubtedly something in this, even if the case is over-stated. The snag, though, is

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Mustard poultice for a leaky radiator

From Mr Richard Kite.

Another solution to the problem of leaking radiators ("Eggs, gaskets and a Jaguar", January 30-31) was recommended to me by Romanian lorry drivers in Craiova, south Romania, while delivering relief aid to that city.

Having precariously driven, by refilling the radiator constantly, a large articulated Volvo F12 lorry in just such a condition from just within the northern

Romanian border, I was recommended mustard as a means to resume my journey back to Scotland. While the Romanian drivers suggested Romanian mustard, in true British tradition a small jar of Colman's was suggested from a fellow driver in an accompanying lorry; this, used sparingly, enabled me to return to Alness, north of the Cromarty Firth, without further problems. Thus I suggest to Peter Millar:

Richard Kite,
4 Cairnlee Park, Bieldside,
Aberdeen, AB15 9AF, UK

Title's role

From Mr Mark Lawson.

Sir, Martin Hoyle (Radio, January 30-31) complains that my use of the words "Shakespeare Our Contemporary" during a discussion on Radio 4's *Front Row* were "a cliché". They are in fact the title of a book (by Jan Kott), which was one of the premises of the item.

Your critic's commitment to absolute freshness of expression is admirable – although his own prose style seems strangely to be exempted from this brave project – but problems might surely arise if presenters were to mint new titles for the famous works they mentioned: that great play *Claudius's Nephew*, this celebrated novel *The Bennett Sisters*, the legendary movie *Don Corleone*. Even intelligent listeners might become as confused as your critic seems to be.

Mark Lawson,
presenter,
Front Row,
BBC Radio 4,
Broadcasting House,
Portland Place, London W1, UK

Doug Henwood,
Left Business Observer,
250 W 35 St,
New York, NY 10024-3217, US

Wife alienated by bureaucracy

From Mr Richard Bentley.

Sir, I am a self-employed IT professional and inventor with international clients. I married a non-EU citizen, a doctor, two months ago. Six weeks ago, I sent the Home Office an application to obtain a 12-month residence/work permit for my wife, enclosing both our passports.

After numerous attempts to contact them by phone, letter and fax, we went to the Croydon office. I was told that it now takes 32 weeks to process an application – seven weeks merely to give the file a reference number. They were willing to return

my passport on condition that I took everything else back. This would have meant losing our place in the queue and my wife becoming an illegal alien.

I was also told that it takes nine months to process an application for an EU citizen in the same predicament. I really don't know if it is worthwhile to remain based here as British citizens are treated better in the EU.

Richard Bentley,
Malfrance Ltd,
7 Cavendish House,
Eastgate Gardens,
Guildford GU1 4AY, UK

Spanish have no claim to 'sherry'

From Mr Roger Griffiths.

Sir, "Sherry" is an English word and, to the best of my knowledge, there is no such word in the Spanish language ("EU and South Africa close to trade deal", January 30-31).

It is a word used to refer to a fortified wine much admired as an aperitif. These wines come

from many parts of the world, some of the best from Spain, where it is referred to as "Jerez". Locally, therefore, it is up to the English to decide where, and by whom, the word should be used.

Roger Griffiths,
37 Hillcrest Road,
Loughton, Essex IG10 4QE, UK

Number One Southwark

Bridge, London SE1 9HL

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COMMENT & ANALYSIS

MAN IN THE NEWS CROWN PRINCE ABDULLAH

The heavy crown of Jordan

Judy Dempsey and Roula Khalaf ask whether King Hussein's son can follow his father in maintaining stability at home and elsewhere in the Middle East

Crown Prince Abdullah bears the same name as his great-grandfather, the founder of the modern kingdom of Jordan. He owes his throne partly to his father's desire to keep the monarchy to his own family line. He will need all his ancestors' determination and wills to hold on to the Hashemite kingdom. It will not be easy.

When Abdullah met dignitaries from other Arab states a week ago, Jordanian state-run television was anxious to present to the public a confident leader.

Abdullah, celebrating his 37th birthday, was seen shaking hands, sometimes smiling, sometimes looking serious. The message the palace wanted to convey was that Jordan was in safe hands.

Yet whenever Abdullah was shown giving a speech or making a statement, television lowered the sound. The Crown Prince's Arabic, spoken with a thick Bedouin accent, is far from perfect.

His mother tongue is English, learned from his British-born mother, Toni Gardner (Queen Muna). He spent much of his teenage and adult years in Britain or the US, studying in military schools.

"I was shocked when I heard Abdullah's classical Arabic," said one Jordanian official. "He is not good at the language. What sort of impression is that going to make on us and on our neighbours?"

It is a good question. Abdullah takes over at a time of transition within the Hashemite kingdom and instability outside it. To the west, the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks have stalled – of more importance to Jordan than most because Jordan signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1994 and because 60 per cent of the population is Palestinian origin. To the north lies Syria, with which Jordan's ties have been historically tense. And to the east turbulent and unpredictable Iraq.

King Hussein managed to keep his coveted desert kingdom safe for 48 dangerous years and earned huge popularity at the end of his life. Even so, he had to survive countless plots, coups, insurrections, a civil war with the Palestinians, and about a dozen assassination attempts, as well as three Arab-Israel wars, and the Gulf War.

Prince Abdullah starts without the advantages his father earned during his long reign. For one thing, he is untested in the ways of Middle-Eastern politics. For another, there is likely to be resentment towards him in the palace, since King Hussein had four wives and 11 children. Most Jordanians had assumed that Prince Hassan, King Hussein's younger brother, would one day become monarch: after all, he had been appointed heir designate when he put on his military connections.

So why did King Hussein choose him? The answer lies in his military connections.

In the Arab world security is defined by military strength rather than the stability of government institutions. The Sandhurst-trained prince has been head of the Special Operations Command, the strike forces of the army and main pillar of the royal guard.

Made major-general last year,

he enjoys the loyalty of the Bedouin-dominated army and, with his excellent relations in the intelligence services, has check instability, or indeed crush any opposition.

He displayed this side of his character when he put down bread riots in the south in 1996, precipitated by an austerity economic package arranged with the help of the International Monetary Fund. He did so again last year when he crushed an Iraqi gang which had been on a murderous spree in Amman. That he is married to a Palestinian is also seen as a valuable asset, given the country's Palestinian majority.

In dealing with regional prob-



Leader in the making: Crown Prince Abdullah reviews a Bedouin guard of honour in Amman

nems, the Crown Prince will have to tread carefully on both Israel and Palestinian issues and on Iraq. On the one hand he will be pushed by Washington to support the 1994 peace treaty with Israel, but on the other hand he has to take into account the hostility to the accord among Jordanians – a balancing act which could prove to be one of his first political

reform. It is far from certain that Abdullah's career and credentials will serve him well in these tasks. His lack of political experience and his instincts, as one western diplomat said, might tend him towards demanding discipline and obedience rather than dialogue and diversity of views.

Equally important, and even more immediate, is what one local banker calls "the economic death" that has gripped the country in the past few years. With an official unemployment rate of 30 per cent, and unofficially over 40 per cent in the towns and villages, public tolerance of economic reforms is at a low.

According to Jordanian bankers, foreign exchange reserves are worth just over one month of imports and gross domestic product has been stagnant or falling in the past two years, while the budget deficit has increased from 2 per cent in 1997 to an estimated 6 per cent last year; 40 per cent of Jordan's trade is with Gulf countries which are facing their own economic crisis following the collapse of oil prices.

Abdullah will have to ward off the threat of Iraq inspiring domestic unrest but follow a policy that can also respond to the widespread sympathy felt in Jordan for the suffering of Iraqis living for eight years under United Nations sanctions.

Before King Hussein's illness,

however, the main subject of debate in Jordan was not the region but greater domestic democratisation and economic reform. It is far from certain that Abdullah's career and credentials will serve him well in these tasks. His lack of political experience and his instincts, as one western diplomat said, might tend him towards demanding discipline and obedience rather than dialogue and diversity of views.

Jordanians eager to be comforted that King Hussein's passing will not threaten the kingdom's stability say Abdullah's wit and his sense of adventure – he has a passion for car racing – make him similar to his father.

"In all, he has more pluses than negatives, even if this succession has been thrust upon him and he was not brought up in a way that instilled political aspirations in him," says a businessman. "But maybe this can be compensated by bringing back the king's old guard advisers."

What appears certain is that manoeuvring his way through the kingdom's myriad problems will take creativity as much as a new style of rule.

Jordanians and foreign observers in the kingdom say Abdullah's reign will inevitably have to include reducing the monarchy's omnipresent role in government.

"King Hussein got away with doing what he did" because he had a very strong personality.

Regardless of Abdullah's personality he will have to introduce economic reforms that are coupled with political democratisation. It is time to weaken the power of the king and strengthen the powers of parliament."

"The crown prince," adds a western diplomat, "simply cannot continue the old ways of his father. Jordan faces many problems. They require new solutions. He must introduce changes that will reduce the role of the king in deciding everything."

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Easyscreen plc Support Services

DPA-Egam plc Electronic & Electrical Equipment

Electronic Fundraising Company plc Media (Technology)

Environmental Polymers Group plc Diversified Industrials

Field Systems Designs Holdings plc Electronic & Electrical Equipment

Genus plc Diversified Industrials (Agriculture)

Granular Shipping plc Transport

Harland Simon plc Electronic & Electrical Equipment

H.O. Group Enterprises Ltd Food Products

Mutual Systems Ltd Electronic & Electrical Equipment

Nebet UK plc Leisure & Hotels

Ritz Music Group plc Media (Music Entertainment)

Shepherd Neame Ltd Breweries, pubs & restaurants

Spectrum Technologies plc Electronic & Electrical Equipment

Soup Works plc Breweries, pubs & restaurants

Telbox Group (The) plc Support Services

TEG Environmental plc Diversified Industrials

Text 100 Group plc Support Services

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Zevco plc Engineering

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A fox

Geoff Dyer

COMMODITIES & AGRICULTURE

Silver rise spurs talk of fund buying

WEEK IN THE MARKETS

By Paul Solman

Silver jumped to its highest price for six months. The timing was impeccable – it was a year ago that the precious metal reached almost \$8 an ounce when Warren Buffett, the legendary US investor, announced he had acquired about 16 per cent of the world's supplies.

This week's gains were more modest, with the London spot contract fixing at \$5.89 an ounce yesterday.

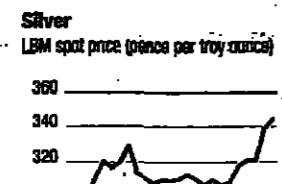
But it was enough to prompt speculation that Mr Buffett was once more active in the market. Analysts linked the rise to trade and investment fund buying on the back of a stronger economic outlook.

Meanwhile, the London Metal Exchange announced details of its new silver contract, due to be launched by mid-year. The contract, which the LME believes will be especially attractive to industrial traders, will allow delivery of granules as well as traditional ingots.

Among the LME's base metals, nickel rose 11 per cent on the week, boosted by speculation that Inco would announce production cuts next week. Three-month nickel closed at a six-month high of \$4.75 a tonne.

Copper remained weak as the LME said its warehouse stocks had risen to a record of almost 650,000 tonnes. Three-month copper ended the week at \$1.38 a tonne, up \$7 on last week's close.

Oil prices drew fleeting support mid-week from renewed tension in the Mid-



Source: London Metal Exchange

LME warehouse stocks*

* Sunday close

de East as the UN pulled its staff out of Iraq. However, in late trading yesterday March Brent had settled back to \$10.64 a barrel on London's International Petroleum Exchange, against last week's \$11.35.

The London International Financial Futures and Options Exchange said soft commodities volumes rose 41 per cent year-on-year in January, with coffee up 61 per cent. This week's coffee price performance was less impressive, with the March contract ending at \$1.723 a tonne, up \$22 on last week.

Colombia, the world's second-largest coffee producer, announced an aid package for growers hit by last month's earthquake. Although the disaster caused little crop damage, it destroyed machinery and storage facilities.

WEEKLY PRICE CHANGES

	Latest prices	Change on week	Year ago	High	Low
Gold (per oz)	\$269.05	+3.70	\$269.05	\$275.75	\$257.75
Silver (per oz)	346.89p	+75.70p	475.70p	255.89p	
Aluminum 99.7% (tonn)	\$121.65	+1.15	\$149.51	\$121.51	\$119.5
Copper Grade A (tonn)	\$143.15	+4.48	\$160.51	\$150.51	\$140.51
Lead (cwt)	\$91.15	+21	\$92.55	\$51.51	\$48.22
Nickel (cwt)	\$488.00	+47.00	\$534.00	\$397.51	\$383.00
Zinc (\$/tonne)	\$101.65	+6.11	\$101.75	\$95.93	\$92.93
Tin (cwt)	\$304.05	+17.75	\$324.00	\$295.00	\$285.00
Cadmium (tonne)	\$175.00	+1.00	\$175.00	\$174.00	\$173.00
Sugar (US\$/Ton)	\$167.00	-4.20	\$262.80	\$267.40	\$167.00
Baileys Future Mar	77.25	-2.50	75.75	130.50	77.00
Wheel Futures Mar	74.75	-0.00	81.50	95.10	55.80
Cotton Futures A Index	56.55p	+0.35	58.40p	73.10p	55.65p
Clothes Super	315p	-0.00	370p	329p	278p
Oil (Brent Blend)	\$101.45	+2.35	\$115.54	\$81.49	\$81.75

* Sunday unless otherwise stated. p = Penny, c = Cent, £ = £sterling.

WORLD BOND PRICES

Data from US hold back Europe

GOVERNMENT BONDS

By Vincent Boland in London

and John Labate in New York

More evidence the US economy shows no sign of slowing its hectic growth again undermined bond markets yesterday, holding back European markets as they tried to recoup some of the week's losses. UK gilts also ended higher, helped by this week's cut in interest rates.

BENCHMARK GOVERNMENT BONDS

Fwd 5	Red Price	Red Coupon	Red Yield	Day chg	Wk chg	Month chg	Year chg
Australia	101.31	107.900	4.84	-0.04	-0.18	-0.14	-0.35
Austria	8.751	125.860	5.25	+0.05	+0.24	+0.14	+0.14
Belgium	9.709	103.900	3.04	-0.05	-0.09	-0.15	-0.18
Denmark	0.101.45	5.000	10.700	3.95	-0.05	+0.02	-0.24
Finland	0.101.10	4.000	100.500	2.98	-0.05	-0.09	-0.09
Greece	0.101.35	113.200	3.98	-0.03	-0.03	-0.10	-0.20
Iceland	12.10	5.000	190.200	4.86	-0.02	-0.15	-0.10
Ireland	0.101.05	8.000	105.700	5.00	-0.02	-0.19	-0.35
Italy	11.05	4.000	101.200	3.01	-0.05	-0.08	-0.10
Portugal	0.101.00	5.000	115.800	3.97	-0.01	-0.05	-0.16
Spain	0.101.00	8.600	117.197	6.11	-0.02	-0.21	-0.03
Iceland	10.30	6.000	105.900	3.12	-0.02	-0.06	-0.07
Australia	101.30	8.751	125.860	4.84	-0.04	-0.14	-0.18
Austria	8.751	103.900	3.04	-0.05	-0.09	-0.15	-0.18
Belgium	9.709	125.860	4.86	-0.03	-0.10	-0.10	-0.10
Denmark	0.101.45	5.000	10.700	3.95	-0.05	-0.09	-0.14
Finland	0.101.10	4.000	100.500	2.98	-0.05	-0.09	-0.09
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Italy	11.05	4.000	101.200	3.01	-0.05	-0.08</td	

BEAT AND LIVESTOCK

CURRENCIES & MONEY

Yen falls back

MARKETS REPORT

By Florian Gembel

Volatile Japanese government bond yields continued to drive the yen, pushing it lower against the dollar during London trading hours.

Japanese government bond yields fell after the country's finance minister, Kiichi Miyazawa, said it was time for the Bank of Japan to conduct money market operations aimed at capping the recent rise in long-term interest rates.

According to Miyazawa's proposal - dubbed "Operation Twist" by market commentators - the Bank of Japan would sell a large portion of its short-term government bond holdings and invest the proceeds into the long end of the bond market.

"With this being a neutral operation, the Bank of Japan might actually accept the proposal - in return for a government guarantee not to pursue the idea of direct JGB underwriting," said Ray Attrill of the economic consultancy 4Cast in London.

■ POUND IN NEW YORK

Feb 5 -1.0000 - Prev. close -
2 mth 1.0303 1.0465
3 mth 1.0312 1.0465
1 yr 1.0323 1.0428

another sign of the continuing strength of the US economy. US companies added 245,000 jobs to their payrolls in January, with the unemployment rate holding steady at this business cycle's low of 4.3 per cent, according to the US Labour Department.

■ Political pressure on the Bank of Japan to underwrite directly Japanese govern-

ment bonds remained a contentious issue yesterday.

The Bank of Japan (BoJ) will continue to oppose the political pressure, not least because it doesn't want to hurt its balance sheet before the fiscal year-end, before the fiscal year-end," said Derek Halpenny, currency strategist at Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi in London.

The steepening yield curve is, in fact, good for Japanese banks, as they can exploit yield differentials between the short and the long end of the curve to offset losses in the JGB market." Mr Halpenny also contended the widely held belief that repatriation of capital held overseas was behind the recent rise in Japanese government bond yields.

Facing the end of the fiscal year, corporations have become increasingly risk averse. The more they have revised down their views on dollar/yen, the more they have increased their hedging activities - the vicious circle being exacerbated by the talk of repatriation." Mr Halpenny said. He thought that Japanese government bond yields would continue to hover at about 2.5 per cent in the near term, only to be capped and sent down later.

EURO SPOT FORWARD AGAINST THE EURO

Feb 5 Coding mid-point Change on day Bid/offer spread Day's Mid low One month One year Rate %PA Rate %PA Rate %PA Rate %PA

Europe Euro 37,4001 +0.1220 614 -385 37,4538 37,0350 37,5440 -46 37,5676 -49 38,2555 -50

Danmark Krone 7,4345 -0.0022 226 -365 7,4500 7,4255 7,4372 -04 7,4429 0.5 7,4675 -04

Greece Drachma 0.4040 0.0070 115 322,0000 320,5000 321,0000 -15 322,5000 -05 341,0000 -62

Hungary Forint 1.0770 -0.0022 100 1.0750 1.0750 1.0750 -01 1.0750 -01 1.0750 -01

Norway Krone 0.8600 -0.0045 493 -504 0.8600 0.8595 0.8600 -12 0.8600 -12 0.8600 -13

Poland Zlote 4.1882 -0.0207 795 -931 4.1881 4.1884 -

Russia Ruble 13,010,16 -0.0022 450 -573 13,010,16 -

Sweden Krona 20,2412 -0.0001 765 -657 20,2407 20,1768 -

Switzerland Franc 0.8253 -0.0029 445 -519 0.8253 0.8242 -

UK Pound 0.5889 -0.0014 932 -922 0.5890 0.5890 -

Americas

Argentina Peso 1.2822 -0.0006 276 -285 1.2820 -

Brazil Real 0.2708 -0.0006 100 -100 0.2708 -

Canada Dollar 1.3708 -0.0006 789 -802 1.3700 -

Mexico Pesos 11,3252 -0.0054 733 -916 11,4233 11,3242 11,3251 -0.5 11,3252 -0.5

USA Dollar 0.1267 -0.0004 137 -137 0.1267 -

Europe Middle East Africa

Australia Dollar 1.7022 -0.0124 267 -318 1.7150 1.7250 -

Hong Kong Dollar 0.7460 -0.0022 100 -100 0.7460 -

Iraq Dinar 47,5310 -0.0016 132 -148 48,2903 47,9864 48,2102 -

Indonesia Rupiah 500,000,000 -0.0022 442 -443 502,000,000 -0.0022 500,000,000 -0.0022

Israel Shekel 4,6150 -0.0101 085 -128 4,6150 4,5981 -

Japan Yen 17,4871 -0.0050 355 -355 18,2000 18,0000 -

Korea Won 1,0750 -0.0022 100 -100 1,0750 -

Malta Lira 4,2360 -0.0006 265 -265 4,2360 -

Philippines Peso 0,5860 -0,0015 281 -281 0,5860 -

Saudi Arabia Rial 0,2333 -0,0012 317 -349 0,2348 -

Singapore Dollar 1,5046 -0,0004 054 -059 1,5045 1,5048 -

South Africa Rand 0,7718 -0,0024 942 -785 0,7725 -0,0024 -

Taiwan New Taiwan Dollars 12,0163 -0,0022 223 -223 12,0164 12,0154 -

Thailand Baht 36,4154 -0,0101 851 -857 36,4154 36,4154 -

UK Pound 0,5744 -0,0006 1164 -1164 0,5744 -

USA Dollar 31,54 -0,0006 5,560 5,560 -

Euro 0,4034 -0,0006 7,435 -7,435 0,4034 -

Other Euro, French Franc, Norwegian Krone or NK, Belgian Franc, Wm, Export, Lit and Penny per 100. *EMI market.

Euro, Swiss Franc, Australian Dollar, Canadian Dollar, Portuguese Escudo, Italian Lira, Spanish Peseta, Belgian Franc, French Franc, Greek Drachma, Irish Pound, Belgian Franc, Indian Rupee, and spot rates and forward rates are derived from the SWISSBANKS' CLOSING SPOT and FORWARD RATE services. Some values are rounded by the FT.

Figures for Feb 4: Sterling quotes in the Pound Spot table show only the last three quoted prices. Sterling rates calculated by the Bank of England. Data average 1990 - 1991. Index revised 1995. *EMI market. The exchange rates printed in this table are also available on the internet at <http://www.FT.com>.

CROSS RATES AND DERIVATIVES

EXCHANGE CROSS RATES

Feb 5 Bt/ Dkr Frf Ft/ DM Ie L Fr Mtr Es Psr Sfr Fr E Cs S Y €

Belgium Bfr 100 18,43 16,28 4,88 1,85 4,900 5,462 21,45 21,55 3,984 1,708 4,164 2,795 316,0 2,479

Denmark Dkr 54,26 11,00 8,823 2,651 1,098 2,620 2,201 2,200 2,200 11,97 2,151 2,151 2,151 1,245

France Frf 51,50 1,00 1,00 1,00 1,00 1,00 1,00 1,00 1,00 1,00 1,00 1,00 1,00 1,00 1,00

Germany Dm 2,00 1,254 1,00 1,00 1,00 1,00 1,00 1,00 1,00 1,00 1,00 1,00 1,00 1,00

Ireland £ 51,22 0,840 0,829 0,803 0,803 0,803 0,803 0,803 0,803 0,803 0,803 0,803 0,803 0,803

Italy £ 2,083 0,384 0,338 0,101 0,041 100 0,114 0,447 0,447 0,447 0,447 0,447 0,447 0,447

Netherlands £ 19,21 3,374 2,977 0,916 0,916 0,916 0,916 0,916 0,916 0,916 0,916 0,916 0,916 0,916

Norway Nkr 0,8522 0,781 0,261 0,910 0,910 0,910 0,910 0,910 0,910 0,910 0,910 0,910 0,910 0,910

Portugal Pt 20,12 3,708 3,272 0,978 0,978 0,978 0,978 0,978 0,978 0,978 0,978 0,978 0,978 0,978

Spain Pt 4,468 3,942 1,175 0,473 0,473 0,473 0,473 0,473 0,473 0,473 0,473 0,473 0,473 0,473

Sweden Kr 45,57 1,00 1,00 1,00 1,00 1,00 1,00 1,00 1,00 1,00 1,00 1,00 1,00 1,00

UK £ 50,55 10,79 0,522 0,259 0,259 0,259 0,259 0,259 0,259 0,259 0,259 0,259 0,259 0,259

Canada \$ 24,01 4,429 3,005 1,164 0,469 1,153 1,312 1,312 1,312 1,312 1,312 1,312 1,312 1,312

USA \$ 35,74 0,587 5,512 1,78 0,69 1,725 1,725 1,725 1,725 1,725 1,725 1,725 1,725 1,725

Japan ¥ 31,54 0,587 5,512 5,516 1,528 1,618 1,715 1,715 1,715 1,715 1,715 1,715 1,715 1,715

Euro 0,4034 7,435 0,560 1,956 0,788 2,204 0,855 0,855 0,855 0,855 0,855 0,855 0,855 0,855

Other Euro, French Franc, Norwegian Krone or NK, Belgian Franc, Wm, Export, Lit and Penny per 100. *EMI market.

Euro, Swiss Franc, Australian Dollar, Canadian Dollar, Portuguese Escudo, Italian Lira, Spanish Peseta, Belgian Franc, French Franc, Greek Drachma, Irish Pound, Belgian Franc, Indian Rupee, and spot rates and forward rates are derived from the SWISSBANKS' CLOSING SPOT and FORWARD RATE services. Some values are rounded by the FT.

Figures for Feb 4: Sterling quotes in the Pound Spot table show only the last three quoted prices. Sterling rates calculated by the Bank of England. Data average 1990 - 1991. Index revised 1995. *EMI market. The exchange rates printed in this table are also available on the internet at <http://www.FT.com>.

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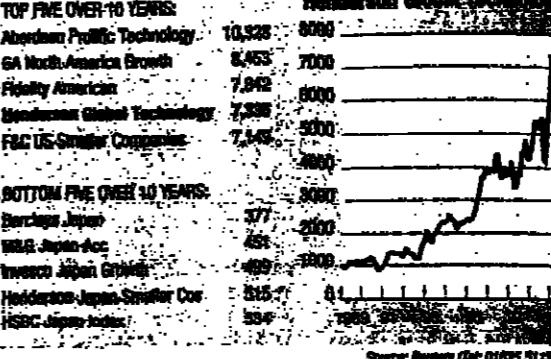
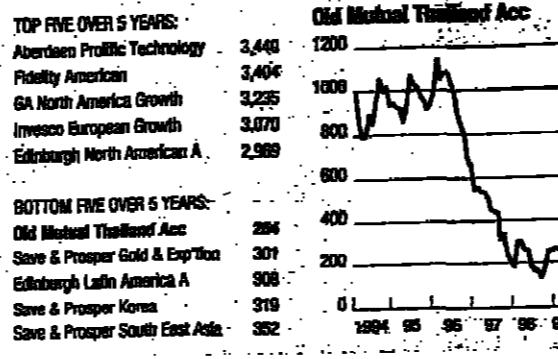
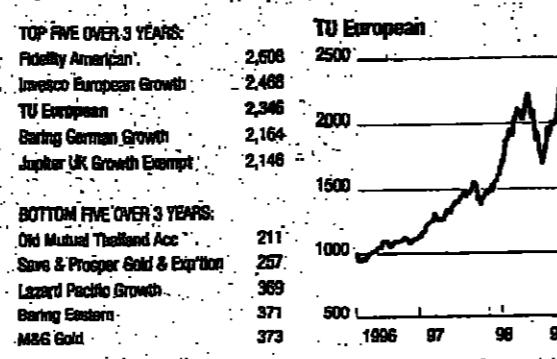
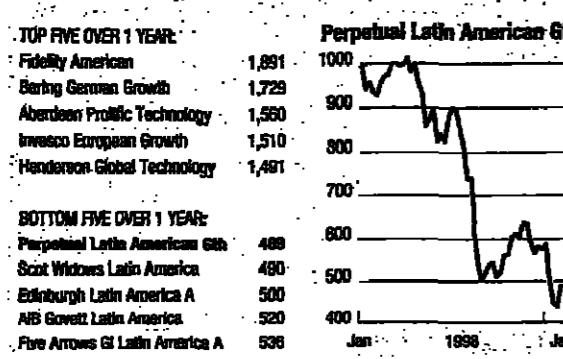
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UNIT TRUSTS

■ WINNERS AND LOSERS



Tables show the result of investing £1,000 over different time periods. Trusts are ranked on 3-year performance. Warning: past performance is not a guide to future performance.

■ Indices	
Average Unit Trust	1024
Average Investment Trust	1028
Bank	1044
Building Society	1062
Stockmarket FTSE All-Share	1078
Inflation	1025

■ UK Eq & Bd.	
Perpetual High Income	980
NPI Extra Income Ret	1095
Confidence Income Dis	1001
Credit Suisse Monthly Inc Port	1025
SECTOR AVERAGE	1005

■ Europe	
INVESTCO European Growth	1510
TU European	1423
Baring German Growth	1229
INVESTCO European Small Cos	1449
Newton European	1227
SECTOR AVERAGE	1183

■ Best Pops	
INVESTCO European Growth	1510
TU European	1423
Baring German Growth	1229
INVESTCO European Small Cos	1449
Newton European	1227
SECTOR AVERAGE	1183

■ UK Growth	
Jupiter UK Growth Exempt	1259
Lloyds TSB Environmental Inv	1131
Johnson Fry Solar Growth	903
River & Mercantile 1st Growth	1025
Exeter Capital Growth	1000
SECTOR AVERAGE	1008

■ UK Fixed Interest	
CSU PFT Preferences	1122
Morgan Grenfell Amity Conv Ex	1154
Aberdeen Profit Stg Bond	1119
CSU PFT Monthly Income Plus	1098
Henderson Preference & Bond	1078
SECTOR AVERAGE	1080

■ Global Emerging Mkts	
Stewart Ivory Emerging Market	737
Hill Samuel Global Energy Mkts	727
Gartmore PS Emerging Markets	758
Mercury Emerging Markets	678
Sure & Prosper Emerging Mkts	713
SECTOR AVERAGE	698

■ UK Growth & Income	
Laurence Klein Income & Growth	1076
Fleming Select UK Income	1050
HL The Utility	1119
Fidelity MoneyBuilder Index	1081
Johnson Fry UK Income	1106
SECTOR AVERAGE	1026

■ UK Gift	
Fleming Select Long-dated Gilt	1252
Fidelity Institutional Lg Gilt	1256
Mercury Long-Dated Bond	1172
M&G Gilt & Fixed Interest	1164
Fleming Select UK Index Linked	1193
SECTOR AVERAGE	1147

■ International Equity Income	
INVESTCO International Income	1145
Premier Global 100	1237
Mayflower Global Income	1020
M&G International Income	1013
SECTOR AVERAGE	1091

■ UK Smaller Companies	
INVESTCO UK Sm Co Acc (GT)	1202
Henderson Emerging Cyclet	1086
BWU UK Smaller Co's	940
Laurence Klein Smaller Co	962
Gartmore UK Smaller Companies	849
SECTOR AVERAGE	910

■ Far East exc Japan	
Friends Pow Australian	1009
HSBC Hong Kong Growth	780
Baring South East Asia	953
Henderson Asian Enterprise	946
Henry Cooke LG East Enterprise	899
SECTOR AVERAGE	940

■ International Fixed Interest	
Newton International Bond	1086
AES Int'l Bond & Convertible	1058
Barclays BGI Int'l Fix Interest	1070
Marborough Managed	1078
Baring Global Bond	1056
SECTOR AVERAGE	1056

■ UK Equity & Bond Income	
Abbey National Extra Income	1030
Jupiter High Income	1058
CSU UK Income	1023
Edinburgh UK Income A	1036
Fidelity High Income	1073
SECTOR AVERAGE	1017

■ Japan	

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what is credited to the

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ONE THING. KNOWING COUNTLESS
complex issues. That's why we offer an extensive range of products and services
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integrated with customized technology solutions. Because while no one knows
125 STOCK MARKETS IS ANOTHER.
your investors like you do, no one knows today's institutional investors like we do.



Serving Institutional Investors Worldwide

Good news week

LONDON SHARE SERVICE

LONDON SHARE SERVICE

كتاب من الأصول

LONDON SHARE SERVICE															
THE FOLLOWING INVESTMENT TRUSTS ARE NOT SUITABLE FOR INVESTMENT IN THE FTSE ACCURATE SHARE INDICES															
Approved by the Investment Trust Council															
Aberdeen Equity Fund															
Aberdeen Income Fund															
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Highs & Lows shown on a 52 week basis

WORLD STOCK MARKETS

	-/-	High	Low	YTD	P/E		-/-	High	Low	YTD	P/E		-/-	High	Low	YTD	P/E		-/-	High	Low	YTD	P/E		
NORTH AMERICA																									
UNITED STATES (Feb 5/US\$)																									
All Indx (1/400)	+1.1%	2910.5	2890.0	105.95	14.00		+1.1%	2910.5	2890.0	105.95	14.00		+1.1%	2910.5	2890.0	105.95	14.00		+1.1%	2910.5	2890.0	105.95	14.00		
ATM Indx (2/161)	+104.1	1088.76	1065.5	1088.76	35.00		+104.1	1088.76	1065.5	1088.76	35.00		+104.1	1088.76	1065.5	1088.76	35.00		+104.1	1088.76	1065.5	1088.76	35.00		
BSE 30 (1/51)	+324.56	3484.47	3361.82	3161.69	2287.78	181.00	+324.56	3484.47	3361.82	3161.69	2287.78	181.00	+324.56	3484.47	3361.82	3161.69	2287.78	+324.56	3484.47	3361.82	3161.69	2287.78	181.00		
Dow Jones (3/263)	+4	8530.5	8570.0	8228.00	1545.00	4781.00	+0.5%	8530.5	8570.0	8228.00	1545.00	4781.00	+0.5%	8530.5	8570.0	8228.00	1545.00	+0.5%	8530.5	8570.0	8228.00	1545.00	4781.00		
Nasdaq (3/263)	+24.07	2072.75	2000.00	1029.00	2500.00	510.00	+24.07	2072.75	2000.00	1029.00	2500.00	510.00	+24.07	2072.75	2000.00	1029.00	2500.00	+24.07	2072.75	2000.00	1029.00	2500.00	510.00		
Nasdaq Composite (1/775)	+8	2072.75	2000.00	1029.00	2500.00	510.00	+8	2072.75	2000.00	1029.00	2500.00	510.00	+8	2072.75	2000.00	1029.00	2500.00	+8	2072.75	2000.00	1029.00	2500.00	510.00		
Palo Alto (3/263)	+34	3457.43	3331.50	3080.00	2550.00	2715.00	+34	3457.43	3331.50	3080.00	2550.00	2715.00	+34	3457.43	3331.50	3080.00	2550.00	+34	3457.43	3331.50	3080.00	2550.00	2715.00		
S&P 500 (1/263)	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5		
Small Stocks (1/263)	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5		
Standard & Poor's 500 (1/263)	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5		
Tech Stocks (1/263)	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5		
Transportation (1/263)	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5		
Utilities (1/263)	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5		
Utilities (1/263)	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5		
Utilities (1/263)	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5		
Utilities (1/263)	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5		
Utilities (1/263)	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5		
Utilities (1/263)	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5		
Utilities (1/263)	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5		
Utilities (1/263)	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5		
Utilities (1/263)	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5		
Utilities (1/263)	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5		
Utilities (1/263)	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5		
Utilities (1/263)	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5		
Utilities (1/263)	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	1087.5	+10.35	1087.5	1087.5</td					

COMPANIES & FINANCE

MEDIA FLEDGLING PAY-TELEVISION COMPANY LIKELY TO CONSIDER LONDON AND NASDAQ LISTING

On Digital ready to float in 18 months

By John Sapper, Media Editor

Carlton: Communications and Granada Group, the ITV companies, may seek a flotation of *On Digital*, their fledgling pay television company, in about 18 months, in order to crystallise its value to their shareholders.

The companies are likely to discuss a flotation of 20-25 per cent of *On Digital*'s equity later this year. Granada, which holds 50 per cent of it, is thought to favour an early flotation because of

uncertainty among investors and analysts over its value.

On Digital, which launched last November and is estimated to have 50,000 subscribers, has been valued at between £250m and £1bn by analysts.

Carlton and Granada have agreed to invest up to £275m over five years to establish *On Digital* as a rival to Sky Digital.

No adviser has yet been appointed to work on the flotation, although Morgan Stanley Dean Witter, the US

investment bank, examined the possibility last year before shareholders decided to concentrate on launching effectively.

The company's board is thought likely to consider a dual listing in London and on Nasdaq, the US exchange. Some directors believe it could attract interest from US investors seeking stakes in new media and digital broadcasting enterprises.

The pay television company, which carries about 20 pay channels and free digital

channels provided by broadcasters such as the BBC and ITV, has been held back by shortages of the set-top boxes needed to receive its broadcasts.

Analysts believe that British Sky Broadcasting has achieved higher sales than *On Digital* of its 140 channel Sky Digital service. The company, which reports half-year results next week, is expected to say that it gained about 250,000 digital subscribers in the three months to December.

However, the contest between the services is closer than these figures suggest because most subscribers to Sky Digital are thought to have converted from its analogue service.

Analysts suggest that about 60,000 of the Sky Digital subscribers are new to pay television.

Shares in Carlton and Granada have risen this year partly because of the launch on time of *On Digital* and growth in ITV advertising revenues.

Electra Trust investigates other options

By Katherine Campbell, Business Correspondent

Michael Stoddart, chairman of Electra Investment Trust, the venture capitalist which *Si* wants to buy, is understood to have presented shareholders an alternative proposal "as quickly as practicable".

The Electra board is said to be considering "various alternative options", but a management "buy-out" by Electra Fleming, the trust's investment manager, appears to have been rejected.

"There are more elegant solutions that would achieve better value for shareholders," said a person familiar with Electra.

Executives close to Electra declined to elaborate. Analysts speculated that Electra could form a "realisation company" which would dispose of assets and return cash to shareholders over a period of years.

While Electra will not release it to *Si* without a signed confidentiality agreement, it says the number would serve as a benchmark for any other proposal.

The Electra side has gone no further than talking of "all sorts of expressions of support".

GE Capital, financial services subsidiary of US group General Electric, has been mentioned by industry sources as one possible suitor.

SB tipped to take loss on pharmacy disposal

By David Pilling, Pharmaceuticals Correspondent

SmithKline Beecham is expected to sell Diversified Pharmaceutical Services, its pharmacy benefit business, to a US buyer for \$750m-\$850m (£460m-£520m), far less than the \$1bn the Anglo-American drugs group had wanted.

Although the price is only about a third of the \$2.3bn SB paid for DPS in 1994, and below what some analysts had been expecting, the decision is likely to be welcomed. "I don't think it's too embarrassing," said Stephen Ewing, pharmaceuticals analyst at WestLB Panmure, the brokers.

Eli Lilly, the US drugs group, sold PCS, another pharmacy benefit manager, for \$1.5bn last year, less than

40 per cent of what it had paid, and so setting the precedent for leaving the sector.

Several drug companies bought pharmacy benefit managers in the mid-1990s in an attempt to influence drug purchasing decisions by US insurers, but the strategy did not work.

Analysts said the cash from DPS would allow SB to spend more on research and development. However, some considered that the company, which is devoting much of its resources to Avandia, a promising diabetes drug expected to be approved this year, could be neglecting other projects.

"This move makes sense. They need the money because they are strapped for R&D funding," said one. The cash would allow SB to step up its licensing of other

companies' products and technologies, and to develop more in-house projects.

Avandia is likely to be a successful product, but its prospects could be damaged by Eli Lilly's Actos, a similar drug that is only a few months behind. "They've been putting all their eggs in the Avandia basket," said one analyst.

Selling DPS, which could be followed by the disposal of Clinical Laboratories, a blood and urine testing unit, could redress the balance.

"They are shaping themselves up for concentration on prescription drugs," said Mr Ewing. That could make them "leaner and meaner", which would bolster their stated aim of staying independent or make them a more attractive merger partner, he said.

Sales growth continues to slow at J Sainsbury

By Peggy Hollinger

J Sainsbury, the UK's second-largest supermarket group, yesterday admitted its high profile campaign to boost flagging sales had failed.

The group, which last year appointed a new management team, produced a disappointing trading statement showing growth substantially lagging the industry. It has called in consultants in a bid to make sure the right products are on the shelf at the right time.

Dino Adriano, chief executive, reported group sales

growth of 3.6 per cent, or 1.5 per cent excluding new stores, for the 19 weeks to January 30. But the core supermarket chain achieved a like-for-like increase of just 1.2 per cent. Excluding price increases, like-for-like supermarket sales fell 0.8 per cent, in a market estimated to have grown almost 2 per cent by volume.

Analysts were critical of the performance, suggesting Sainsbury - once the market leader - was likely to show the weakest Christmas sales record of the big four. They criticised the management, which five months ago launched the Value to Shout

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launched the Value to Shout

Newsquest in talks on P&S titles

By Charles Pretzlik

Newsquest, the regional newspaper publisher, yesterday said it was in preliminary talks with Portsmouth & Sunderland Newspapers, about buying its rival's newspaper assets. It said any acquisition would be on a "friendly and agreed basis".

Newsquest, which is thought to have approached P&S about two weeks ago, faces tough competition.

Johnston Press, a rival regional newspaper group with a 14.9 per cent stake in P&S, has already declared its interest in bidding for the whole group. P&S has also received an approach from Charles Villiers, formerly head of Score, the newspaper division of Scottish Radio.

Shares in P&S, whose titles include the Portsmouth News and Sunderland Echo, rose 25p to £17.25p, valuing the group at £207m.

Newsquest is not thought to be interested in buying

Weir rebuffs Flowserve approach

By Michael Peel

Weir Group, the Glasgow-based engineer, yesterday rebuffed a \$600m (£395m) takeover approach from Flowserve of the US.

Flowserve, which makes pumps, valves and seals, said it was disappointed with the decision and would be reviewing its position.

Analysts said Weir shares, which closed down 28p at 281p, remained attractive to a potential bidder.

Weir, which makes pumps, valves and metal handling systems, said this week that

it received an unsolicited approach from an unnamed company. The Scottish group yesterday revealed the potential bidder as Flowserve and said that the indicative offer of \$600 a share failed "by a wide margin" to reflect the value of the group.

Sir Ron Garrick, chief executive and chairman of Weir, said the group wished to remain independent. "We have got the capability to develop existing resources," he said. "We are not trying to put the group on the block."

Sir Ron said Weir had

avoided takeovers in recent times because it saw potential targets as overvalued. It was now looking for acquisition opportunities.

It is thought Texas-based Flowserve, which had net debt of about \$180m at September 30 last year, believes it has the financial capacity to make an offer pitched higher than 300p.

The indicative offer is understood to have implied interest cover of at least three times.

Analysts estimate fair value for Weir at between 350p and 400p a share.

Pressure from disaffected shareholders acting in concert with predators such as arbitrageurs has forced a number of weak trusts to the wall. More than £2bn of money that left the sector last year came from investment trusts that converted, wholly or partly, to unit trust status.

The outflow of money, widely forecast to continue this year, will be accelerated by the abolition of advance corporation tax in April, allowing trusts to buy back shares without incurring a big tax liability.

A third of trusts have already sought shareholders' permission to do this, according to HSBC Securities.

As a result, 1999 will be one of the most momentous years in the investment trust industry's 130 year history, it said.

BT Alex Brown forecast that "at least as much again, if not more" would vanish this year, as disaffected shareholders demanded cash back from underperforming trusts. But the broker said the exodus of money was "not a disaster... the sector will survive".

The BT Alex Brown figures follow estimates last week from broker HSBC Securities that there could be "up to £15bn of pent up selling pressure," primarily from institutional investors, such as pension funds.

The sector's problems have their roots in its boom years of the mid-1990s when over £5bn was raised, according to analysts. The resulting over-supply of shares left trusts trading on wide discounts to the value of their underlying net assets. This is turn hit share price performance - over the past five years, the sector has underperformed the FTSE All-Share index by 25 per cent.

Analysts estimate fair value for Weir at between 350p and 400p a share.

Burmah Castrol in US lubricant purchases

Burmah Castrol yesterday expanded its industrial business, which manages the lubricant needs of industrial customers with the acquisition of two US companies for \$15m, writes Thorold Barker.

Castrol Industrial, a fully-owned subsidiary, bought Lubcon Systems, making it the leading supplier of performance lubricants and associated services in the US. Lubcon, of Michigan, has a turnover of about £10m.

It also bought Chemicals International's performance lubricants business, which markets and distributes products for Tribol Lubricants; a Castrol Industrial subsidiary. The business has turnover of about £5.5m.

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FINANCIAL TIMES WEEKEND FEBRUARY 6/FEBRUARY 7 1999

COMPANIES & FINANCE

MEDIA SEPARATE STOCK COULD EASE PATH TO FURTHER ON-LINE ACQUISITIONS

NBC and CBS eye internet listings

By Richard Waters in New York

NBC and CBS, the US television networks, are each considering a separate stock market listing for all their internet interests, to provide them with currency for further investments in the online world.

Separately, it emerged that NBC is in discussions over taking a stake in Lycos, the internet portal company, in a deal that would cost it more than \$1bn.

According to one person with knowledge of the com-

panies, however, this is only one of a number of discussions under way and may not lead to a deal.

Lycos indicated last month it was interested in selling up to a 20 per cent stake to a media or telecommunications company – an investment that would currently cost about \$1bn.

A Lycos investment would add to what already amounts to the broadest array of internet interests yet assembled by a traditional US media company. NBC already owns a range of

internet sites, including stakes in CNET, an internet publishing company, and Snap, another portal.

NBC's moves echo efforts under way at other US media and entertainment companies, which are scrambling to establish a position in the fast-consolidating internet media world.

"One of the benefits of having its own stock will be that the new company can make acquisitions," Tim O'Brien, chief financial officer of Ziff-Davis, said yesterday.

The soaring value of internet companies over the past two months has made it prohibitively expensive for traditional media companies to make acquisitions.

By contrast, At Home, a provider of high-speed internet access, is using \$6.7bn of its pumped-up stock to buy Excite, one of the biggest internet portals.

Creating their own majority-owned internet subsidiaries could give companies like NBC and CBS access to the same elevated stock market ratings, enabling them to make similar acquisitions.

The soaring value of inter-

Seagram may merge PFE

By Alice Rawsthorn

Seagram, the Canadian entertainment group, is reconsidering proposals to merge parts of PolyGram Film Entertainment into Universal Pictures after the collapse of talks to sell it to Prince Muhammed Bin Bandar Abdul Aziz.

The prince, a member of the Saudi royal family, paid \$50m into an escrow account last month as a deposit on a \$500m deal to buy PFE, which has backed such hits as *Four Weddings And A Funeral* and *Elizabeth*.

Seagram, which bought PFE last year in its \$1bn bid for the PolyGram group, had hoped to close the deal by early next week, but Prince Muhammed proved unable to secure the necessary capital.

On Thursday evening, the prince's lawyers asked Seagram for more time to complete the financing. Seagram refused, having been sceptical about his ability to fund the acquisition since he first expressed interest in PFE last summer.

Unless Prince Muhammed secures the necessary capital, or an 11th-hour bidder emerges – Canal Plus, the French media group, has

been trying unsuccessfully for months to finance a bid – Seagram will have to decide whether to close down PFE's remaining assets, or to fold them into its Universal subsidiary.

Universal management is pressing Edgar Bronfman Jr, Seagram president, to allow it to keep PFE's non-US film distribution network and some production interests.

They presented proposals for a merger, together with Stewart Till, head of PFE International, to Mr Bronfman in Los Angeles last week.

Seagram, which has held long-running talks with Eric Fellner and Tim Bevan, co-chairmen of Working Title, the successful PFE-owned production company behind *Fargo*, *Bean* and *Four Weddings*. Their contracts expire shortly, and both men have been hotly pursued by rival studios.

After abandoning talks with Prince Muhammed, Seagram dusted off the merger plan. If the merger goes ahead, the Canadian group will probably have to close PFE's US distribution interests and some of its production companies there. It has already sold PFE's film library for a total of \$400m.



Saab Automobile, the Swedish car company managed and 50 per cent owned by General Motors of the US, has reported its first six-month profit for five years, writes Tim Burt in Stockholm. The company, which has suffered accumulated losses of more than SKr681m (\$1.22bn) since GM took its stake in 1988, reported a profit of SKr691m in the second half of last year. Second-half profits helped Saab to sharply reduce its full-year losses. Pre-tax losses fell from SKr1.91bn to SKr622m for 1998 on sales up from SKr2.24bn to SKr2.4bn. Pictured is the planned Saab 9-5, with designer Simon Padam.

Metsä-Serla profit surges

By Tim Burt in Stockholm

Metsä-Serla, the Finnish pulp and paper group, saw pre-tax profits jump by 80 per cent last year amid buoyant demand and rising prices for its fine paper products.

The company, one of Europe's leading producers of magazine grade paper, packaging and tissues, reported profits up from FM1.01bn to FM1.82bn (\$206m, \$345m) in 1998, on turnover ahead from

FM19.2bn to FM21bn. Officials said the improvement had been fuelled mainly by the paper division, where operating profits rose fourfold from FM22m to FM107m.

Group operating profits – up from FM2.02bn to FM2.3bn – were also helped by maiden full-year output from a new FM2.5bn fine paper machine and improved gains at its Bister subsidiary in Switzerland.

That offset the adverse impact of lower pulp prices in the fourth quarter, when underlying profits fell sharply to FM277 from FM454m in the previous three months.

In the final quarter of 1998, Metsä-Serla's results were also hampered by volatile demand in south-east Asia and Russia.

Earnings per share rose from FM4.20 to FM7.57. Met-

sä-Serla's B shares rose yesterday 60.21 to 66.45 in Helsinki.

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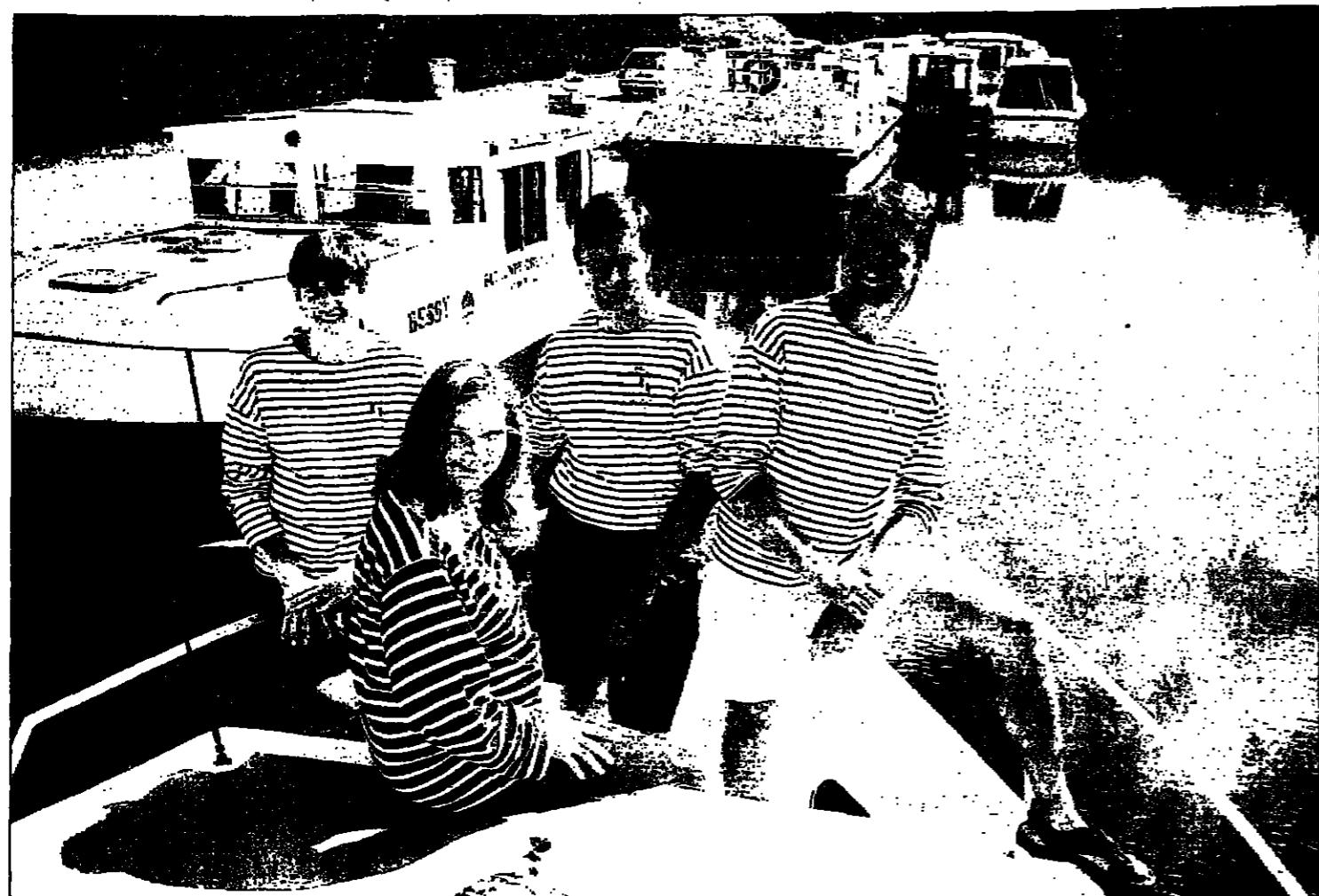
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PERSPECTIVES



Zoe and Steve Adams and Michael Gardner-Roberts, with Lesley, seated: bought a boatyard, and then set up an agency for the bookings

Minding Your Own Business

Sharp change of tack

Andrew Eames sees how two couples kept on an even keel after charting a new life

Ten years ago, Mike and Lesley Gardner-Roberts took a year off from their jobs in the City of London - he was a Lloyd's underwriter, she worked at Société Générale, the French bank - to travel through France on their narrowboat. They didn't come back.

Five years later, Mike's sister Zoe Adams, an insurance broker, and her research chemist husband Steve left their home in Kent to spend a long weekend with them in Burgundy. A couple of months afterwards, they too had been swallowed up by the French waterway system.

The two couples decided to change career tack in mid-stream and set up in business together.

It all began with a boat-yard-for-sale advertisement which Steve spotted in The Sunday Times. He knew his brother-in-law and his wife had tired of their itinerant lives working on hotel barges, and were thinking of settling down. So he sent them the advertisement and, with Zoe, went with them to see the yard at Vermenton, on the river Cure south of Auxerre in northern Burgundy.

"I suppose we rather fell in love with the place," Steve recalls. "But we were not in the least bit considering giving up everything to run a boat-hire business in France."

With hindsight, the boat-hire novices suspect the previous owner had had wind of the news. But now they were on their own, and the future was suddenly looking very insecure. But they all agreed there was no going back.

After investigating a switch to other UK agents or even to the French and German markets, they decided instead to jump into the

space being vacated by Hoseasons - and to set up their own UK agency for independent boat-hire operations in France. They remain equal partners in Burgundy Cruisers, and in the agency France Afloat.

Burgundy Cruisers, with its 15 craft, was purchased for £155,000, 25 per cent of which came from each couple, and 50 per cent from Zoe's and Mike's parents. In its most recent trading year turnover was £103,000 and net profit £9,500; not a fortune by any standards, but there was room for development, and the core business - mostly British holiday-makers - seemed secure.

The main priority was to replace the ageing fleet of cabin cruisers, and the two couples decided to carve a distinctive niche by creating their own wood-finished steel-hulled vessels. In the meantime, however, they made the best of what they had got, and did all the operational jobs themselves.

Then, nine months into their first year a letter arrived from their main UK agent, Hoseasons. "Letters from Hoseasons were usually a source of pleasure, cheques or bookings," says Steve. But this one said that Hoseasons, which provided 65 per cent of their business, would no longer be representing small companies.

Meanwhile, revenue began to flow from the private moorings they had installed and from associated maintenance or repairs. Their relationship with boatbuilders in Britain meant it was a fairly easy step to decide themselves agent for new boat sales in France.

The fleet replacement programme had to be continued. They did not feel that they could approach the

banks at that time, so Mike and Zoe's parents paid £30,000 for the first boat; the second was funded out of the first year's operations.

Capital for the third and fourth was partly raised through "sponsorship" whereby investors put up the money, receive four weeks' access to their boat and 35 per cent of its income.

Last year this amounted to 8 per cent of the original investment.

Meanwhile, the four partners began to specialise, although all kept an equal say in management. Zoe looked after the accounts; Lesley, the most fluent French-speaker, French administration.

Mike did most of the meeting and greeting, and Steve started to concentrate on public relations and advertising.

They employed a port manager to look after the boats and a second part-time cleaner to supplement the one they had inherited. Both new employees were previously unemployed, which meant a healthy government grant and a temporary amnesty on insurance contributions.

France Afloat was launched in January 1996, and that year turned over £132,000, as well as providing Burgundy Cruisers with half its bookings.

Having acquired a track record, the partners approached their local bank for loans amounting to £50,000 to keep the boat-replacement programme moving.

The old fleet was gradually sold for a total of £160,000, but the delay in taking delivery of replacements meant that Burgundy Cruisers became short of

boats, and it had to turn people away.

In all, replacing the whole fleet cost £261,000, but through sponsorship, co-ownership and boat management Burgundy Cruisers has only invested £208,500.

France Afloat's turnover has increased steadily, meanwhile, to £171,000 in 1997, and more than £200,000 last year. With France Afloat's contribution, the parent company's turnover will amount to about £450,000 for 1998 - four times greater than when they bought the company - including £55,000 from boat sales and moorings.

Last year the partners shared £19,000; 10 years ago,

when they all had "real" jobs, their combined income topped £100,000 plus three company cars.

But priorities are different, with quality of life more important, children to be nurtured and a business to be developed.

The two couples expect

1999 to be a different story, with a full-strength fleet in which no boat is more than three years old, far lower maintenance costs, and little in the way of interest charges.

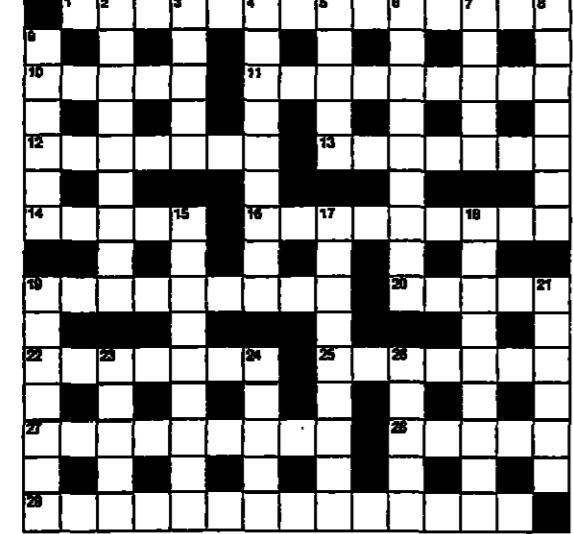
They would like to expand by opening bases on other waterways so they can sell more of their own product through the France Afloat brochure. This might eventually mean breaking down the business according to their differing interests and ambitions as individuals. But they are all still interested, and they are still good friends.

■ *Burgundy Cruisers, 1 Quai du Port, 89270 Vermenton, France. Tel: 33 (0)3 86815455. France Afloat tel: 0171-707000.*

CROSSWORD

No. 9,907 Set by CINCINNUS

The prize of a £1000 set of fine engraved pens and notebooks from Crane's Pen & Paper will be awarded for the first three correct solutions opened. Solutions by Wednesday February 17, marked Crossword 9,907 on the envelope, to the Financial Times, Number One Southwark Bridge, London SE1 9HL. Solution on Saturday February 20.



WINNERS 9,898: R.D. Colley, London E4; R. Harris, Waltham Leics; Mrs A. Peacock, London W4
Crossword sponsored by:

Abels International Moving Services

CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 1 Living for food (5,3,6)
- 10 Dream about packing a gun (5)
- 11 Prisoner with severe cramp (9)
- 12 Picknick artist (7)
- 13 Common name for Mike, Ron, Dick? (7)
- 14 One who gives a fellow gold (5)
- 16 In a communist country Lawrence comes to desert first, having developed in favourable conditions (9)
- 19 Who was put out by tenor bias? (9)
- 20 Methuselah's father takes one back to church (5)
- 22 They catch kids (7)
- 25 What a witness does at cricket matches (7)
- 27 Idaho led congress around the fourth of July and had a few more (7)
- 28 Fine-class inflation (5)
- 29 Improvised poem composed in foreign setting (14)

Solution 9,906

PANAMA OVERLOAD

L U G U I S X E
A N D S I R C P E N I A
V O T E S S T E P L E M E N T Y
T E S D R E S S H
O P P R E S S O R E S S Y
N O P N P D
S T R E A M P O T H O L E
M N I L S O S
A C C I D E N T A L K N O W
T R A I N R E C E P T I O N
E S C H E I L E
R E T R E A T S B T C I O N

DOWN

- 2 The odd athlete or smuggler? (3,6)
- 3 They assist in the formulation of ideas (5)
- 4 Atlantic island rising (9)
- 5 Material requirement for environmental impact (5)
- 6 Making a tunnel be independent (9)
- 7 Meagre weekend for Judge (5)
- 8 Stopped work and went to bed? (7)
- 9 Excelled like international sportsmen (9)
- 15 Spotted about port (9)
- 17 Prophetess with cards as an alternative (9)
- 18 Bride's outfit - a sort of skirt by Jean-Jacques? (9)
- 19 Spirit has been crushed (7)
- 20 Sleuth forced to solicit (5)
- 23 Of course one has expert knowledge - a constant amount (6)
- 24 Authority, for example (sic) (3,2)
- 25 Sample making sense (5)

Solution 9,906

E L E C T R I C H A R E
A I O O A B N S
M O M I N I L T O R I O L I P
T E F E C U A
T H E G U I T A
D R E V E R E
U N E X P E C T E D A N I M I
E T C O N T
I D A T E T O M M S W O M E N
E O U Y O A C
A N Y T H I N G B E L O W
B S Y H A Y T
E S Y H A Y T
E S Y H A Y T
B O R N D U
P R A C T I C I O N E R

BRIDGE

CHESS

Goir Helgemo and Tor Helness have become only the second pair to retain The Macallan International Pairs Championship. Many see their victory as confirmation they are the world's best.

N

▲ J8

▼ Q103

▲ J42

■ Q9832

W K Q 10 5 3

▲ A 9 7

▼ 7 4

■ K 8 7 5 3

▲ A Q 9 6

■ 5 6

▲ A J 10 5

S

▲ 6 4 2

■ K 9 8 6 2

▲ 1 0

■ K 7 4

Dealer: N N/S vulnerable

and West's 4S was a cue-bid following agreement of diamonds as trumps. After this East launched into Roman Key-Card Blackwood to check, not for aces - of which he held all four - but for the king of trumps.

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Paul Mendelson

Garry Kasparov made a triumphant return this week when he won the FIDE 2000 (£2,200) first prize in the Hoogeveen grandmasters' tournament at Wijk aan Zee.

Kasparov's 10/13 was half a point in front of India's Viswanathan Anand, two points clear of the world No 3 Vlad Kramnik, and one of the best rating performances by a world champion.

Critics of Kasparov's failure to defend his title since 1995 and of his absence from tournaments in 1998 may only be temporarily silenced, though.

The Russian is effectively playing double or quits in two weeks as he competes in another top event at Linares in Spain where Anand and Kramnik will again be in the field.

This game, which Kasparov had to win to stay ahead, shows his rampant skill in a hard type of game to play, where the attacker's king remains in mid-board (G Kasparov v P Svidler).

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 Nf3 Bg7 5 Qb3 dxc6 6 Qxd5 0-0 7 e4 a6 8 e5 b5 9 Qb3 Nf6 10 e5 fxe5 11 Be2 Nb8 12 h4 Nf6 13 h5 Rfd8 14 gxf6 Nxd5 15 Rxf6 h4 16 Rxd5 Qd7 17 h6 g5 18 Rxd5 Qe6 19 Rxf5 g4 20 Rxf4 Qe5 21 Rxf5 Qe6 22 Rxf4 Nf6 23 Qd3

Black to move

M. Seibold (Germany), L. Borgman (Netherlands), correspondence 1998-9. It was the first unofficial European postal championship, and Seibold won despite missing his chance in the diagram where 1 Qh4? Qd8 led to a draw.

Can you improve? The puzzle comes from Chess Mail (00 3331 4933333), the monthly magazine for postal players.

Solution, Back Page

Leonard Barden

PERSPECTIVES

Ethics Today



Can speech ever be both correct and free?

People today have to be careful what they say – especially football coaches it would seem, says Joe Rogaly

The most important man in the universe lost his job this week. He had behaved offensively, so he was fired. I refer, of course, to Glen Hoddle, until Tuesday the coach of England's football team. Some say he had to go; others that he was driven out by the media, a victim of political correctness.

Both theories have merit, as I shall explain. Political correctness – PC – was invented in the 1980s, on college campuses in the US. Derogatory remarks about women, blacks, Jews and other groups were forbidden. Students could say what they liked, so long as they remained within the boundaries set by their nannies.

The PC rules were adopted by many in the prime parts of the American media. They were

ignored by certain "shock jocks", radio's merchants of hatred. One of the most infamous, I read on the Web, described a black Mayor of New York as "a man's room attendant" and advocated "drowning Haitian refugees".

We Europeans are aware of the First Amendment, but we nevertheless wonder why racism on the air is permitted under the US constitution. We also tend to doubt the notion that if every word spoken was PC, tribal conflicts would never occur.

Yet the tendency to censor anything that might cause offence to anyone at all has spread across the Atlantic. Thus do we believe two contradictory propositions at once. Opinions should not be constrained. The use of language must be circumscribed. The trick, impossible to

get right, is to establish whether a line can be drawn, leaving free speech on one side and incitement to do harm on the other.

The verse from one of my albums of country music keeps coming back – *saints and stones can break my bones but words can break my heart*. Actually, words can be murderous.

This was accepted by a federal

jury in Portland, Oregon, on Wednesday. It awarded \$107m in punitive damages against anti-abortionists who listed the names and addresses of "baby butchers" on an internet site called The Nuremberg Files. When three doctors were killed, their names were crossed through on the list.

Such fanaticism can be lethal. Freedom of speech cannot permit it. But what about Jerry Falwell,

who preaches on the small screen? He has apologised for saying that the Antichrist is Jewish and probably alive today. To the extent that the evangelist was expressing a theological opinion and not fuelling antisemitism, he arguably had the right to make his original remarks.

So far, so delicate. We can now return to Mr Hoddle. He was reported in last weekend's edition of The Times as saying "You and I have been physically given two hands and two legs and a half-decent brain... some people have not been born like that for a reason. The karma is working from another lifetime."

Uproar. Groups representing disabled people protested. The prime minister said that if Mr Hoddle had been quoted cor-

rectly he could not stay in his job. The shoal of media phrasa closed in on the doomed coach's thrashing body.

Yet if you take the two US cases quoted above, Mr Hoddle falls lightly on the Falwell side of the line. His notion of re-incarnation sounds muddled. His Hindu-Buddhist beliefs were as

fundamentalist form, is politically incorrect, replete with verbal denunciations of non-believers, homosexuals, women, single mothers...

The strongest argument for the dismissal of Mr Hoddle is that he was an important public figure, a role model, a high priest of the soccer religion. It was incumbent on him to restrain himself, to avoid gross discourtesy to any group. While he held the job he could not enjoy the freedom of speech allowed to stand-up comedians.

That line we seek to draw is elusive. The law should deter

public use of language that foments antipathy towards others, but it should also allow everyone to speak his or her mind. It is one of those things none of us will ever get quite right. When in doubt, I say

favour free speech.
joe.rogaly@j.com

Lunch with the FT

Harvard hero beckons whites into his world

Henry Louis Gates has fulfilled a lifelong dream with his new project Encarta Africana, writes Victoria Griffith

Perhaps the biggest surprise of a visit to the offices of Henry Louis Gates, hero of the black intelligentsia, is finding that his secretary, Joann, is white.

In fact the whole of Harvard University's Afro-American Studies department which Gates runs, seems a model of integration, where yachts-looking Anglo-Saxons intermingling with distinguished-looking blacks.

On reflection, it is a fitting environment for Gates. As a celebrity academic, he has spent his life inviting white people into a black world.

On the day I meet him, he is beaming about his latest project, a CD-Rom encyclopaedia that provides a showcase for the contribution made by blacks to history.

For those of us from the white universe, the publication of an encyclopaedia may not seem much cause for celebration. Yet it is an achievement that took African-Americans most of this century to fulfil.

The pan-African encyclopaedia was the unfulfilled dream of W.E.B. Du Bois, the pre-eminent black philosopher of the early 1900s. Du Bois spent most of his life trying to find a sponsor for his project; racism and ignorance did him in, and he died without finding a publisher. Ever since Gates was a student and first read of Du Bois' failed quest, he has dreamed of that elusive encyclopaedia.

Now the US software giant Microsoft has fulfilled that dream; last month Encarta Africana was officially released. "The primary cause of racism is ignorance," says Gates. He addresses his audience of one as if he were lecturing a hall full of people. "The best way to combat ignorance is to marshall scientific facts about the negro."

Showcasing the CD-Rom in a darkened conference room, Gates presides over the portrayal of his race's accomplishments like a father showing off his children's report cards.

Gates with pride as he clicks on an audio tape of Bessie Smith, the great blues singer of the 1920s. "I picked out most of the music clips myself," he confides.

The encyclopaedia, which Gates edited together with a Harvard colleague, the acclaimed author Kwame Anthony Appiah, is at times deadly serious, at times

light-hearted. Under the heading, "Aardvark", for instance, we learn that Malcolm X, the black rights leader, was fascinated by the spelling of this word and made a special visit to the Bronx Zoo, just before his death, to see what an aardvark actually looked like.

Gates had originally planned to meet me over lunch at a local Indian restaurant, but has instead asked Joann to bring in some "veggie burgers" so he can demonstrate his work. (He is not a vegetarian, he points out, but just likes meatless burgers.) He complains a few times about his hunger and the cold he is nursing, and when the food finally arrives, the slight-framed Gates digs in with relish.

As the foremost interpreter of the black experience for white America, Gates's glamorous lifestyle is the envy of many Harvard academics. The university will not reveal his salary, but he is rumoured to be the best-paid member of the "Talented Tenth", the group of accomplished blacks that Du Bois expected would lead its race to better times.

Those better times have proved more elusive than Gates's predecessors might have predicted.

While Gates is clearly proud of his racial heritage, he is disturbed by the split in the US between the black middle class and the poor.

He has the perplexing statistics to hand. In 1967, just 5 per cent of US blacks were professionals or managers. Today, more than 20 per cent are. Yet while black influence has been growing, so has black poverty. More than half of all black men between 25 and 34 are jobless or unemployed.

"MLK [Martin Luther King] would never have predicted this kind of chasm," says Gates, standing up and pacing slightly, as if he were at the front of a classroom. "He didn't give his life so that half of us would make it and half of us wouldn't."

There are a number of theories to explain this gap. The extreme

right argues that blacks' poverty is solely of their own making. The extreme left blames years of discrimination by the white population. Gates falls solidly in the middle, upholding both races.

"Black poverty is both structural and behavioural," he says. "Of course, discrimination is still a problem. But black people also have choices. You don't have to get pregnant at the age of 16. You don't have to kill your next-door neighbour."

If a robber's climbing in your window in the middle of the night, you're probably not going to be thinking about the hard time he had growing up."

Gates bemoans what he sees as the decline of intellectual ambition among American blacks.

"When I was growing up, we didn't aspire to be sports stars," Gates says. "Thurgood Marshall [the first black Supreme Court justice] was who we wanted to be. It should be Vernon Jordan, not Michael Jordan."

Yet Gates is also critical of many whites for failing to provide much-needed social assistance to the inner cities. More needs to be done to protect and educate poor black children, he believes, and more must be done to help poor blacks become entrepreneurs and professionals.

It is perhaps Gates's ability to see the issues from both sides that has made him such a bridge between whites and blacks. His

mother hated whites, Gates wrote in his autobiography, *Coloured People*.

As a student at Yale in the late 1950s, colleagues and professors seemed less surprised by his presence there, during the first flush of affirmative action, than by his ability to get top marks. Their low expectations still grate on Gates's nerves.

Yet the professor is no stranger to prejudice. His own formidable intelligence seems a challenge to anyone who would doubt the abilities of his race. He is ever-conscious of that role, and every sentence he utters seems measured.

In the meantime, the internet has sneaked into my life, from which I learn that the exercise in constructing a society and determining how scarce resources are allocated can "clarify values in ourselves".

The first thing SimCity did for me was to confirm that, in dismissing a teenage whim to train as a town planner, I had made a sound decision – not only for me but for urbanites wherever I might have ended up. But then it was only my first go at the first computer game I had really wanted to play since a 50p outlay on a Space Invaders game in a pub in the late 1970s put me off them.

Gordon Cramb meets the man behind the program that allowed him to create his own town

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Harvard's Henry Louis Gates: "When I was growing up, we didn't aspire to be sports stars"

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While he never underestimates the problems of racism in America, he believes other countries are complacent about the challenges they face in this area.

"Racism takes different forms,

depending on the country it is in."

says Gates. "England has its own particular form of racism. Brazil is one of the most racist countries around. Just pick up a magazine there and count the number of black faces you see inside."

For the time being discussions about race have been put on hold in the United States. Gates believes it is only a matter of time before the tensions come back to the boil.

"In the US, we talk about it during a big event, then we stop," says Gates. "But talking

can only do so much anyway. All we seem to do in the US is talk about race."

Ironically, talking and writing about race is what Gates has spent his life doing. Any white who spends an hour with him will feel closer to the black race, and more in awe of it, for having done so.

Perhaps more than any of his contemporaries, he has become the secretary of state for people of African descent. His Encarta Africana is his latest plea for peace.

But adults like to use supposedly practical architectural programs as toys, says Wright. A handy 3m of those have been sold, largely to couples most of whom have no intention of placing an order for that conservatory or deck.

Scaled right back, my early urban planning ambitions show up indoors these days on sheets of graph paper every time I move house: furniture plotted in, kitchen reconfigured. Next time, that will all be done on computer.

In Wright's computer house, an otherwise static family scene gains an edge through the arrival of neighbours and home improvements. Who will be first to jump naked into the hot tub just built in the back yard? "These characters actually do have relationships," he says. I find this statement alarming. But then I'm not your average Weftonian.

My virtual disaster as a planner

Gordon Cramb meets the man behind the program that allowed him to create his own town

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"People have asked us to plan a city or a social system. That

in the meantime, the internet has sneaked into my life, from which I learn that SimCity has been around for nine years and has sold 3m copies. I have joined its newsgroup and forged acquaintanceships with people I have not met. From participation in this virtual community, I was now ready to create one.

There were about 1,000 of us at Doors of Perception, a three-day multi-media design and culture exhibition organised for the fifth time by the Netherlands Design Institute. The most visible difference between this and other

computer fairs was that the suits were fewer and the spectacle frames modishly thicker.

In her *Joystick Nation*, a history of video games, J.C. Herz calls SimCity and its spin-offs "essentially digital terrariums for grown-ups". And the main point of having an ecosystem at your fingertips, whether digital or planted in dirt, must be so you can manipulate it.

Or is that too much a male conclusion? Brenda Laurel has

three daughters and has been designing computer games since 1977. Boys want superheroes, she says, but girls seek out "people

(digitally generated characters)

BOOKS

From a roar to a whimper

Peter Montagnon on tiger economies

Three or four years ago, Asia seemed to have a secure future, not only as the economic powerhouse of the next century, but also as the fount of the world's social and moral values. Decades of near double-digit growth, stretching out into the indefinite future, would confer on the region an enormous concentration of wealth and consequently the ability to impose on the rest of the world its own standards in everything from political philosophy to consumer taste and lifestyle.

Then after the devaluation of the Thai baht in July 1997, everything went wrong. A wave of speculation hit the currencies of the region, causing most of them to plunge and interest rates to soar. Once-prosperous businesses were suddenly insolvent. Economic output contracted sharply, with gross domestic product in

region, and that newly acquired wealth brought with it the same moral turpitude - materialism, drug culture and loose sexual mores - for which Asia's rulers used to lambast the West.

In fact materialism has left an



Futile fluttering in the wind? Prayer flags at the Potala Palace, Lhasa

Tony Stone

THE TROUBLE WITH TIGERS
by Victor Mallet
HarperCollins £19.99, 332 pages

THE RISE AND DECLINE OF THE ASIAN CENTURY
by Christopher Lingle
L.B. Tauris £14.95, 316 pages

Indonesia falling almost 15 per cent last year - a fall comparable to the slide in the US economy during the great depression.

These two books deal with what caused the collapse. Both authors have wide experience of southeast Asia. Victor Mallet covered the region from Bangkok for this newspaper from 1992 to 1995. Christopher Lingle was a fellow at the National University of Singapore until he was forced to make a hasty exit after offending that country's first family and its patriarch Lee Kuan Yew.

Both authors start from the premise that the "Asian values" on which the economic miracle was based were flawed. Mallet and Lingle both argue that the core Asian value of placing the needs of the community before those of the individual was little more than a front for keeping authoritarian governments in power. The close relations of those governments to businesses, which were also run in an autocratic way, helped create a short-term boom, yet it also fostered an insidious climate of cronyism and stunted the development of the rule of law.

Mallet's contribution to the debate is valuable because it focuses less on economics and more on the region's social development. He shows that the so-called Asian values were not shared by all countries of the

region, and that newly acquired wealth brought with it the same moral turpitude - materialism, drug culture and loose sexual mores - for which Asia's rulers used to lambast the West.

In fact materialism has left an

aching void in the value system: witness the rise of charismatic Christianity in Singapore and the slow drift towards a more fundamental Islam in Malaysia and Indonesia. By the time the boom turned to bust, large tracts of the region were facing an HIV epidemic and had succumbed to environmental degradation.

Mallet is quite right that the

failure of Asian governments to develop a civil society limited the scope of the boom and meant that bust was inevitable. He has fewer pointers to where we go from here. The supposition in his conclusion is that rapid growth will return once the economic crisis is over. I am less convinced that southeast Asian governments will easily overcome the kind of institutional failings he so graphically describes. Much also depends on what happens in Japan and China, whose fate will do much to shape the rest of the region. Nor can it yet be said with certainty that economic failure will lead to the democracy for which Mallet believes the average Asian yearns.

Mallet's book is engagingly written and rich in anecdote, but it is fundamentally a work of journalism. One might expect more argued answers from an academic like Lingle. In the event, his book turns out to be a disappointment. The main problem is that this is a hasty and clumsy revision of an earlier work - in Chapter 5 he talks of the Hong Kong handover as if it were still in the future and then, in Chapter 11, analyses it as an event now past. The book thus also suffers far more than Mallet's from appearing to be an attack on a value system that since July 1997 has essentially lain in defeat, and while Mallet's painstaking research brings Asian society to life, Lingle's book comes across as a rant.

What serious analysis of Asia should now focus on is how the region's social and economic evolution will and should be influenced by the crisis.

Lingle is contemptuous of journalists who failed to see through the cruel incompetence of Asia's regimes. Yet some, like Mallet, wrote critically of Asian values even when they were reporting from the region. Mallet has struggled to keep his book up to date through a period of extraordinary change; Lingle's failure to do so betrays only sloppiness.

To order "The Trouble with Tigers" at a special price of £17.99 (inc. UK p&p) call FT Bookshop on +44 (0)181 324 5511 (24hrs)

The wheel comes round

Cal McCrystal reviews a timely history of Tibet

A few years before the outbreak of the second world war, H.G. Wells tried to imagine Gautama, founder of Buddhism, returning to earth to search Tibet for evidence of his own teaching.

"About this Buddhist country-

side he would discover a number of curious little mechanisms, little wind-wheels and water-wheels spinning, on which brief

prayers were inscribed. Every time these things spin, he would learn, it counts as a prayer. Moreover, there would be a number of flagstaffs in the land carrying beautiful silk flags, which bore the perplexing inscription 'Om Mani padme hum', the jewel is in the lotus.' Whenever the flag flaps, he would learn, it was a prayer also, very beneficial to the gentleman who paid for the flag and to the land generally... And this he would realise at last, was what the world had made of him."

Tibetans, it seemed, were going nowhere on the Wheel of Becoming. After the war, the land of the snows had no roads, no wireless, no soldiers worthy of note, no cash beyond what might be minted from the silver in Lhasa's

Potala treasury, and - crucially - no diplomacy.

Britain, which had invaded the country in 1904 (following Russia's practical annexation of Manchuria), lost interest in Tibet on losing India in 1947. Within Tibet, problems were virtually addressed by consulting oracles, and in 1949, a problem arose in the shape of a spikier wheel: the revolution that created the People's Republic of China. Beijing quickly declared the "liberation of Tibet" to be its "sacred duty", and, in 1950, invaded. Chinese Cultural Revolutionaries consolidated the conquest in the 1960s and 1970s with unswerving brutality. By then, the Dalai Lama, Tibet's spiritual leader, had become a refugee in India; the oracles had failed, and the jewel had left the lotus.

As evidenced by this book's 20 pages of bibliography, there have been many accounts of the Tibetan trauma, some of them very searing. One (*Tibet: The Facts*), which I read nine years ago but is not on Tsering Shakya's list, describes the destruction of the monasteries and art treasures as "an utter cultural catastrophe" and refers to the "deliberate and diabolical murder

of a country... unparalleled in this our time".

The vindictiveness of the Red Guards and the atrocious tactics of Lin Biao, Mao's scheming Number Two, no doubt justify any superlative. Yet this is a winningly measured book, restrained and diligent, and one which, therefore, provokes thoughts

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Plots, spies and cigars

Michael Carlson on the guerrilla tactics of the American Civil War

cities, with the aim of encouraging "Copperheads", who sympathised with the South or simply opposed the war, to rise against the seemingly unpopular President Lincoln.

Dahlgren was only 21 years old and had already lost a leg in battle. His father, Admiral John Dahlgren, was a close friend of Lincoln's, and one of the North's most able commanders. The orders were quickly denounced as forgeries by the Union. But the question was further complicated by the accusation that Dahlgren had spent six weeks as a spy in Virginia, gathering intelligence about Richmond, and becoming very popular with the locals despite his curious reluctance to dance or run races.

Dahlgren was a fascinating story, yet it proves to be a mere springboard for Duane Schultz's even more entertaining tales about the men and women who spied and organised the would-be

lower called Annie Jones, to whom Kilpatrick gave a major's uniform and a pass through the lines. This she may also have used to visit Jeb Stuart, the enemy's cavalry leader. When Jones's presence finally caused a scandal Kilpatrick and Custer each tried, in a less than gentlemanly manner, to place her in the other's company.

Kilpatrick's daring plan, in which he attacked Richmond's main defences while Dahlgren led a smaller force from the west to capture Libby prison, would have worked had the General possessed the same will to press attacks as to plan them. When Kilpatrick's assault became bogged down in the face of only minimal resistance, Dahlgren's command was doomed. In retreat, Kilpatrick lost many of his troops through failure to defend his encampment properly, a feat he was to repeat later in the war while distracted in his tent by

another young woman dressed in his general's gear. His retreat in his nightclothes became infamous as Kilpatrick's Shirt-tail Skedaddle.

These subplots and many others like them cry out for more space, especially because the mystery of the Dahlgren affair itself seems remarkably cut and

dried. The odd way Jefferson Davis intervened personally in the disposition of Dahlgren's body leads one to suspect an ulterior motive, a suspicion reinforced by the signature on the infamous orders themselves, in which Dahlgren appears to have misspelled his own name.

It seems unlikely that a gentleman like Dahlgren, who treated his Confederate prisoners with unusual courtesy, would have agreed to murder Davis' another family friend. But one wonders why Davis would have needed the pretext of an assassination plot to launch his own treason. If Dahlgren had reached Libby Prison, he would have discovered that the Confederates had placed tons of powder underneath it, and were willing to blow three city blocks to smithereens rather than allow the Yankees to take it.

By 1864 the Civil War had already evolved into the nightmare of guerrilla terrorism and violence against civilians that help mark its place in history as the first "modern" war. Schultz's account serves as an enthralling starting point for anyone interested in the stranger symptoms of that total war.

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FINANCIAL TIMES

No FT, no comment.

Fiction/Richard Skinner

THE DAHLGREN AFFAIR:
Terror and Conspiracy in the Civil War
by Duane Schultz
Norton £18.95, 298 pages

instigating a revolt around the Democratic Party convention in Chicago, but inevitably the Rebels discovered that Copperheads would be unwilling to risk war against their own government.

In between failures and escapes, Hines also helped finance his operations by selling his story to a Boston magazine, and found time to spirit his fiancée away from her convent school, well inside Union territory, for an engagement party and for their wedding.

The Richmond raid was

lower called Annie Jones, to whom Kilpatrick gave a major's uniform and a pass through the lines. This she may also have used to visit Jeb Stuart, the enemy's cavalry leader. When Jones's presence finally caused a scandal Kilpatrick and Custer each tried, in a less than gentlemanly manner, to place her in the other's company.

Kilpatrick's daring plan, in which he attacked Richmond's main defences while Dahlgren led a smaller force from the west to capture Libby prison, would have worked had the General possessed the same will to press attacks as to plan them. When Kilpatrick's assault became bogged down in the face of only minimal resistance, Dahlgren's command was doomed. In retreat, Kilpatrick lost many of his troops through failure to defend his encampment properly, a feat he was to repeat later in the war while distracted in his tent by

another young woman dressed in his general's gear. His retreat in his nightclothes became infamous as Kilpatrick's Shirt-tail Skedaddle.

These subplots and many others like them cry out for more space, especially because the mystery of the Dahlgren affair itself seems remarkably cut and

dried. The odd way Jefferson Davis intervened personally in the disposition of Dahlgren's body leads one to suspect an ulterior motive, a suspicion reinforced by the signature on the infamous orders themselves.

What binds the characters together is their shared sense of displacement. None is in their "correct" place and each seeks some kind of human contact.

What drives them is love, whether it be physical, emotional or religious. Tragedy strikes when they stumble towards these dreams and realise, once they get there, that their dream is another person's nightmare.

Often, these dreams are actually visitations. Sandy spends hours gazing at the stained glass in his church and at Van Eyck's *Adoration of the Lamb*. Raymond, ill with AIDS, suffers hallucinations of older, better times and Gloria claims she saw, as a child, the Virgin Mary in a spruce grove, glowing "like a TV set in a dark room". The way in

which religious belief operates in daily life is a leitmotif.

Hannah is best known as a playwright, but you'd never know it - his sentences are clear, crisp and pleasingly organised. The smalltalk fits in such remonstrances as captured well and the rising suspense is never bungled. But the book is overlong. Hannah's heavy use of internal monologues constricts our point of view, but occasionally leads to longueurs. Several passages could have been excised without losing any depth of characterisation.

Luckily, these flaws can be overlooked by the skill with which Hannah manoeuvres his characters through the narrative. Pulled by love, fear or delusion, they forever move one step beyond themselves, towards a climax that is both shocking and inevitable.

A strange sense of belonging

in the cold, dark, windswept flower beds of the British Museum's East Asian galleries, by Roy Foster

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BOOKS

A strange sense of belonging

On the centenary of Elizabeth Bowen's birth, Roy Foster re-assesses her achievement

Something interesting has been happening to the reputation of Elizabeth Bowen, who was born 100 years ago and died in 1973. Tomorrow night's *Bookmark* programme, directed by Sean O'Mordha (who has made memorable films about Beckett, Yeats and Joyce) with Ruth Alison as location director, marks another stage in her re-evaluation. No longer simply seen as a post-Bloomsbury grande dame or a neo-Jamesian psychological masterwork, Bowen's reassessment began with Victoria Glendinning's biography 20 years ago. Now all her novels have been republished by Vintage; Deborah Warner is filming Bowen's elegiac novel of the Irish revolution, *The Last September*, from a screenplay by John Banville; the thesis writers have begun to flock in, and conferences in Ireland are devoted to her work. Indeed one of the aspects of Bowen which has begun to attract attention is her Irishness. She never doubted it, even if others did so on her behalf.

But it is a particular kind of belonging. She was born to a decaying Anglo-Irish Big House, spent a peripatetic orphaned youth in England and Ireland supervised by a committee of Ascendancy aunts, and lived a life between London literary salons and Bowen's Court in County Cork (which she filled with friends like Virginia Woolf, Iris Murdoch, Rosamund Lehmann and Isaiah Berlin). Her fiction is full of concealment, evasion and secrecy; in a characteristically defiant pronouncement she remarked: "I am dead against art's being self-expression." But one of the strengths of O'Mordha's subtle and atmospheric programme is that he shows the links between autobiography and art, and explores the several levels on which Bowen's topography is a territory of displacement and secrets.

Her best-known novel, *The Heat of the Heart*, gives the programme its title and is about the betrayal of an awkward adolescent girl at the hands of her smart, worldly-wise relatives. Her most commercially successful book was an astonishing evocation of wartime London, *The Heat of the Day*. Honourable attempts are periodically made to dramatise or film it; but the supercharged atmosphere, conveyed in prose of such languorous intensity that it sometimes trembles on the edge of self-parody, eludes interpreters.

In this and in her last experimental novels, her writing seems closer to Henry Green than most other contemporaries but, always a risk-taker, she also struck echoes of Anglo-Irish predecessors like Sheridan LeFanu or even Maria Edgeworth. All her books return to sensation, flamboyance, the thinning of the membrane between the real and the unreal; her ghost stories have a particular convincing eeriness, and again place her in a certain Irish tradition. She has a penchant for danger, which oddly

schooled in her life as well as her art. Not conventionally pretty, she also possessed a savage and slangy wit, which she exercised freely in her later novels. Despite an engaging stammer and an initially reticent manner, her personality could light up a room and magnetise people. Long after her death, her close friend Molly Keane remarked: "Elizabeth has never diminished"; for her friends she remained as forceful a presence as ever. Married young, and happily, to the educationalist Alan Cameron, she believed that "guilt is squilid", and subsequently had passionate love affairs with the literary critic Humphrey House, the Irish writer Sean O'Faolain and the Canadian diplomat Charles Ritchie. These liaisons remained discreet; one of the most remarkable moments in O'Mordha's film comes when Julia O'Faolain reads out loud - with evident surprise - a 1937 letter of Bowen's

Bowen never doubted her Irishness, even if others did so on her behalf

announcing that she has fallen in love with Julia's father, casually mentioning his wife and daughter. (In another letter, Bowen angrily told House that his wife should be prepared to make some allowances: "I make plenty for her.")

Crossing borders and testing limits is a leitmotif of the novels, and this too reflects her displaced background. She described the Anglo-Irish as the "only children" of Irish history, spoiled, superficially self-confident but fundamentally at a loss. (Childless herself, she wrote with incisive certainty about unhappy childhoods.) Her attachment to Ireland was fierce and possessive, but she also belonged elsewhere; during the war she wrote *Seven Winters*, a short book about her Dublin childhood and *Bowen's Court*, a long one about the history of her ancestral house in Cork, factoring up to its origins in dispossession while affirming in every line her commitment to continuance. But the war, while inspiring some of her best writing, also provided her with an opportunity for the kind of barrier-crossing that was her métier; on her visits to neutral Ireland she took soundings from all manner of people, including politicians, and relayed confidential reports back to Whitehall on Irish morale and opinion.

This has long been known, but when I published extracts from the wartime reports (now in the Public Record Office) in an essay on Bowen some years ago I was surprised at the reaction. The word "spy" was bandied about and dis-



approval expressed by people who had already decided that her descent and background disqualified her from being a "real" Irish writer. This required ignoring the content of the missives, which included - inter alia - a powerful defence of Irish neutrality ("It would be more than hardship, it would be sheer disaster for this country, in its present growing stages and with its uncertain morale, to be involved in war") and some sharp home truths that cannot have been welcome to Ministry of Information ears ("The charge of disloyalty against the Irish has always, given the plain facts of history, irritated me. I could wish that the English kept history in mind more, that the Irish kept it in mind less").

The whole involvement can be exaggerated. Her reports were never top secret and Bowen herself (always short of money, despite her elegant lifestyle) frugally recycled much of the material into articles for journals like the *New Statesman*. But the reactions point up a

residual ambiguity about where "Anglo-Irish" writers belong in Irish life, and - nowadays - in Irish memory. O'Mordha's film lingers on the pile of broken stones that is all that remains of Bowen's Court today. After her husband's death, financial pressures forced her to sell rapidly to a local man whom she thought would live in it, but he demolished it for building materials within the year. It was, according to Molly Keane, an agony to her. Bowen called it, bracingly, a "clean end", and her link with Ireland frayed from that point.

From this landscape," she had written in *Bowen's Court*, "personal pain evaporates, all history evaporates." The locale of some of her greatest short stories is Irish. *The Last September* and *A World of Love* are completely Irish novels, while key scenes of *The House in Paris* and *The Heat of the Day* take place in Ireland; her autobiographical writings consummately convey the nuances, subtleties, bitternesses and exhilarations of Irish

life. "All my life I've been going backwards and forwards between Ireland and England and the Continent," she told an interviewer, "but that has never robbed me of any feeling of my nationality." She certainly deserves her current re-evaluation as a bravura stylist, an experimental novelist and a psychological analyst of devastating acuteness. But it is also relevant to a quintessentially and consciously "divided" Irish person, whose understanding of herself and her background enabled an imaginative reconciliation between ostensibly differing worlds and compelling histories; often by crossing boundaries into the contradictory, the *farouche* and the uncanny. Her best work shimmers with this strangeness, and tomorrow's *Bookmark* film does it justice.

Bookmark - The Death of the Heart, BBC2, Sunday 8.30pm. Roy Foster is Carroll Professor of Irish History at Oxford and has written about Elizabeth Bowen in *Paddy and Mr Punch* (Penguin £8.99).

The shadow of fame

Adam Hopkins on a daughter's memories of Spain

In a book that often achieves great meditative beauty without false sentiment or gush, Lucia Graves, the only daughter of the poet Robert's second family, offers the story of her upbringing and adult years in Spain. She was raised on Majorca during the Franco dictatorship, and then married and lived close to Barcelona through Franco's later years and death and on into the times of freedom, the new democracy and the reawakening of the Catalan language and nationhood.

A WOMAN UNKNOWN:
Voices from a Spanish Life
by Lucia Graves
Linguo £18.99, 273 pages

The still and delightful surface of her childhood is quickly shaken into a bruised turbulence, like the Mediterranean in winter, by events both internal and external, but the political story at least has a happier outcome.

At a personal level, all might very easily have ended in misery and a rejection of Spain with Lucia Graves's divorce from her Catalan husband almost a decade ago and a late move to England. But on a recent visit to Barcelona to look after her mother while she had an eye operation, Lucia Graves saw "a woman unknown" in the corridors of the hospital - quite unexpectedly began to re-experience and re-evaluate her Spanish past, deciding in the end it had not been entirely made up of futile years.

The narrative flows from this second look at her life, shorn of her past identity as Spanish wife, mother, neighbourhood housewife, is filled not only with her own memories, her delicate perceptions and forthright analysis, but also with the stories of other Spanish women who have touched her life or occupied her thoughts.

One element of the book documents, powerfully and often painfully, the deeply structured repression of women by men, permeating women's deepest understandings of themselves. This, Lucia Graves implies, is even more a part of life in the Mediterranean than it is in northern Europe. She may have had a head start as the daughter of a writer whose *White Goddess* is a hefty tribute to the values implicit in female sensibility. But it should be said that Robert Graves himself makes only brief appearances in the book.

More unusual, and indeed illuminating, is the way in which the political and ideological story of Lucia

Graves's Spain, beginning with public stultification, mendacity and fierce repression, then flowering into a kind of muttering freedom tempered by this bitter past, becomes her own life story. The outwards histories of sex, religion and politics, as manipulated by a semi-fascist church and government, and the slow liberation of her deeper thoughts from this hideous official repression make the present book a highly revealing account, not only of a woman's life, but of a whole extraordinary passage in one contemporary European country.

Though there has been at least one other outstanding evocation in English of a Spanish childhood under Franco - Alan Jolis's *Speak Sunlight*, which dealt mainly with Galicia - this is the one that takes you deepest into Spanish society and, with its extension into adult life, over the longest period.

The worst you can say of this book is that the movement from section to section is sometimes rather mechanical and obvious, and themes are handled a little too discursively in places. Yet the text as a whole is subtle and collected. Lucia Graves is a bookish person and a professional translator, moving without barriers between English, Spanish and Catalan. Indeed she has translated her father's books into these last two languages. She knows a thing or two about the resonance of words as well as their primary meanings, her own cool web of composition releasing more than it confines.

She is most subtle about identity and language, the rootlessness of Spaniards, the terrible nostalgia and sense of exile felt by Spanish

The narrative is filled with stories of women who have touched her life

speakers (herself, on occasion) deprived of their linguistic and physical habitat. She is excellent on the Jews in Spain, the terrible sadness of their expulsion and the need, so strongly felt today, to revive their history. The book is also full of memorable short passages and vignettes, from childhood to adulthood, while at the same time the voices of the "other" women are audible throughout. It should be read by everybody interested in Spain and in women's special history in the present century.

A rich vein of exploitation

The blood business has a lot to answer for, writes Max Wilkinson

When idealism and human greed are stirred together, the bad too often contaminates the good with devastating results. The story of blood transfusion is one of the saddest examples of recent times, and the infection in this case was much more than a moral metaphor.

The combination of cynicism, ignorance and desperation that allowed blood banks to become contaminated with hepatitis and then HIV has been described before. Still, it deserves to be better known. Douglas Starr has done a good job in pulling the threads of history, politics and science together and weaving them into a racy narrative aimed at a wide audience.

His story starts with a 17th-century attempt to cure a violent madman by filling his veins with the "calming" blood of a calf. Nothing was known then of the immune reaction that would cause the body to react violently against incompatible blood. Nor was it understood that blood has no influence on character, racial distinctive and inheritance.

Such confusion was hardly surprising in an age that invested blood with an almost mystical significance. It is more remarkable that the error persisted well into this century, long after blood transfusion had become one

of the most important ways of saving lives.

Hitler's refusal to allow the pure blood of the master race to be diluted with the supplies from Jewish or Slavic donors was to cost his soldiers dearly. It greatly reduced available supplies of blood to the battlefield, while the persecution and murder of Jewish doctors enfeebled the science of transfusion. This obstinate racism persisted, despite

the vivid examples and eyewitness accounts.

Star's book conveys the broad panorama of the world at war through the focus of the story of blood. This is not a book for the squeamish, but Star handles the distressing details with a fair degree of clinical restraint.

When the war was over, the queues of volunteer donors melted away in the US. Advances in the technology of splitting blood into its different components, and ever increasing demand for transfusions, soon turned blood collection into a worldwide business, albeit with voluntary roots. But in the US particularly, blood-processing companies had to turn more and more to suppliers who paid donors. Even before the hazards of HIV

Failure of the arts

This year's Walter Neurath Lecture, the 30th, was delivered by historian Eric Hobsbawm, and it can hardly have come as happy news to those involved in the contemporary art scene.

His title, *Behind the Times: The Decline and Fall of the Twentieth-Century Avant-Garde*, sets the tone

for an all-out attack on the visual arts in our century.

In an age when "the fundamental assumption

behind the various movements

of the arts... was that relations

between art and society had changed

fundamentally" the visual

arts, alone among the

various art forms, have

"patently failed" in

rethinking their role,

Hobsbawm contends. After

the mid-1960s, the

revolutionary urge ran out of

steam, "leaving behind

avant-gardes which became

a sub-department of

marketing", and from then

onwards "the real revolution

in the 20th-century arts was

achieved... outside the

range of the area formally

recognised as 'art'.

It was to be found in

the combined logic of

technology and the mass

market" - chiefly the

cinema, but also in

advertising, cartoons and

other commercial forms that

"converted the masses to



daring innovations in visual perception, and which left the revolutionaries of the easel far behind, isolated and largely irrelevant".

One of the few

contemporary movements

to escape Hobsbawm's

derision is Pop Art. The

significance of Andy

Warhol's mechanically

reproduced images - like

Marilyn (1967, above) - is

money". By accepting the world, they expressed the flavour of their times, Hobsbawm claims, more faithfully. Thus today's emphasis is on conceptualism: "something that even unskilled humans can do, and camcorders can't - having ideas".

Behind the Times, Thames & Hudson, £27.95

ARTS

Drama of the uncertainty principle

Alastair Macaulay talks to Michael Frayn about his much-lauded play

Last year, two contrasting plays by Michael Frayn opened in London: *Copenhagen* at the National Theatre and *Alarms and Excursions* at the Cottesloe Theatre in the West End. At some deep stylistic level, the two in fact are clearly the product of the same mind: in each, you see how Frayn keeps ringing the changes on one basic idea, looking at it from one angle after another, spinning variations on one theme like a classical composer.

But *Alarms and Excursions* is a divertimento (or collection of short divertments), and shows us once more the Frayn who for many years has been one of Lon-

don's leading comic writers. It is *Copenhagen* - a dark, sober and severe sonata of a play, showing us the less familiar and more ruthlessly serious Frayn - that has now won two awards. It has already been seen - albeit for a brief season - in the US, in New Haven, and rehearsals are currently under way for its first production in French, in Paris. Next week, after running for eight months at the National Theatre, the original production - with the original three actors - opens in the West End at the Duchess Theatre.

I met Frayn, the day after *Copenhagen* had won the 80th British Drama Award, at the orderly studio flat in Camden Town where he works. He began writing plays in his early 30s; he is now in his mid-60s. Frayn's comic plays, his fiction, and his comic sketches had led me to expect somebody restless, self-conscious, wise-cracky, and energetic.

Instead I find him - at least over the space of some 90 minutes - calm, contemplative, slightly severe and somewhat remote. He often leaves an extended silence at the end of one paragraph of thought, and will start a new one without anxiety when he is ready. His hair is a handsome white; his bone-structure pronounced and strong; his accent aristocratic.

What put *Copenhagen* into his head as an idea for a play? It has

three characters - the Danish physicist Niels Bohr, his wife Margrethe, and the German physicist Werner Heisenberg and it shuttles in time between 1941 and the present timeless zone in which they are, all three, dead. Very early on, Heisenberg says (to the air): "Now we're all dead and gone, yes, and there are only two things the world remembers about me. One is the uncertainty principle, and the other is my mysterious visit to Niels Bohr in Copenhagen in 1941. Everyone understands uncertainty. Or thinks he does. No one understands my trip to Copenhagen..."

The irony - that everyone understands uncertainty while nobody understands a factual event - is quintessential Frayn. From this irony, he spins his play. The date, 1941, is important: Heisenberg had visited Bohr in Copenhagen before, and would do so later, but his decision to do so in 1941 has led to constant questioning.

"My education was in philosophy," says Frayn, "and anyone who's interested in philosophy has to be interested in the physics of the 1920s. So I knew about Bohr and Heisenberg. I'd read David Cassidy's biography of Heisenberg (titled *Uncertainty*, 1992) soon after it came out. Then I read Thomas Powers's book (*Heisenberg's War*, 1993), which interested me in the actual 1941 visit to Copenhagen."

The play is about both motivation and uncertainty. Wittgenstein was the philosopher who showed how much uncertainty there could be in determining what's going on in one's own mind. Heisenberg's motivation for going to Copenhagen in 1941 could be a textbook example of this. So many people have speculated so much about it, and, though I favour some speculations more than others (I do think that others read the evidence differently), I have left the play eventually open-ended."

After reading philosophy at Cambridge, Frayn moved into journalism, then into fiction and plays. "Plays certainly weren't a natural progression from my university experience: quite the opposite. I'd written for Footlights at Cambridge, and it didn't go well. That gave me sour grapes about theatre for several years. I wrote sketches, and some of the sketches sent up the whole business of theatre - of actors trying to remember their lines, of audiences determined to enjoy themselves. But eventually I



Copenhagen is the first time I've consciously investigated motivation in a play: Michael Frayn

wrote two TV plays. Then a theatrical sketch, *Mixed Doubles*. When the New York producer Alex Cohen read it, he refused to handle it because it was filthy. Now he'd presented *The Homecoming* and several plays with far more shocking material than mine, so I had to find out why on earth this bothered him. It was because someone changed a baby's nappy onstage; he couldn't handle that."

Between 1978 and 1988, Frayn re-translated the four best-known Chekhov plays and also adapted the unwieldy *Platonov* into a play of his own, *Wild Honey*, and his versions have been widely acclaimed. "There have been lots of playwrights who've translated Chekhov without being able to

'Bohr was, notoriously, both inarticulate and inaudible! Nonetheless, everyone found him loveable'

read Russian, and there have been lots of Russian experts who've translated Chekhov without being able to write plays. My position, in that I could do both, was unique."

I asked if, like Alexander with no more worlds to conquer, he wept for more Chekhov to translate. "Well, I was often asked to translate *Platonov*, but I always turned it down because I just

didn't think it worked very well as a play. And I must say that when I saw the Almeida version in 1987, David Hare's version made it work for the first time for me. He doesn't have Russian, and I think he removed some of the coarseness that had bothered me in the original, but he made it a wonderful play. It's actually better, I think, than the original."

Were there dramaturgical lessons Frayn had learnt from working on Chekhov? "Oh yes. You can't help but absorb. To translate a play, you must learn how it works. Chekhov, you learn, is all plot. It may seem just to happen when you hear it, but that's the trick. When you analyse it, you find that every word, every line, plays its role in the narrative whole."

Frayn once wrote that all his plays were "views of the world". Is *Copenhagen* his first historical play? "It's my first based on historical reality," he replies. "I did write a fictitious one (*Balmoral*, 1978, later retitled *Liberty Hall*) about a meeting between Enid Blyton, Hugh Walpole, Godfrey Winn and others, including the Russian Kotchetof. But, yes, this is my first one with real people who actually did meet and know each other. I found it very inhibiting at first to try catching the way they spoke. A very hard but interesting task: especially catching Heisenberg, who has often been rendered as a formal and correct man in several books. But David Irving's book *The Virus House* (1987) helped; in interview there, Heisenberg is much more relaxed." (Frayn has written a detailed 20-page account of his sources and interpretations in the postscript to the published text of *Copenhagen*.) "Bohr was easier, because his motto was always to explain his work, to

use his own motto, 'in plain language'. Mind you, his concept of 'plain language' was a special one: it was the language of classical mechanics. And he was, notoriously, both inarticulate and inaudible! Nonetheless, everyone found him loveable. To him, conversation was fundamental to work and he really did talk everything through with Margrethe, who typed everything he wrote. She had to be part of the play too, because she was such a part of Bohr's work and because she too had her own view of Heisenberg, more severe and less family than her husband's."

Has he had feedback from those with specialist or personal knowledge of the characters?

"I've had an absolutely massive postbag, a lot of it from scientists. I was especially pleased to hear from Heisenberg's colleague Carl von Weizsäcker, whom I mention several times in the play. He's in his 90s now, and hadn't seen the play. But he'd read it, and his brain's in good working order. He had one or two things to say, but he liked it and was very interested. I also heard from Gustav Born, who felt with some justice that I underplayed or misrepresented the part played by his father Max Born: the truth is that I wasn't able to do full justice to all the characters concerned in a play of this nature. And quite a number of people wrote in - all very courteously, I must say - to point out the odd error, and one really blatant mistake, or rather nonsensical mathematical assertion, that somehow the scientific adviser I had used to check my text and I myself had both allowed to slip through all our re-readings of the text."

Is *Copenhagen* Frayn's first scientific play? "Yes." And is it his

first philosophical play? "Oh, you could say that all my work, at any rate all my plays, are informed by my reading of philosophy. *Alphabetical Order* is about, or can be said to be about, the interdependence of order and disorder. I wrote *Noises Off* primarily to entertain, and I'm more than happy if people get nothing but entertainment from it. But you could say it was about the phenomenology of appearances."

Benefactors, you could certainly say, about the interchange of ideas of good and bad. But *Copenhagen* is the first time I've

two acts - take a long time to evolve? "Yes: I had to do a lot of writing before I could see what kind of play it was going to be."

The play is in part a *recherche du temps perdu*, and its characters commute between several time-zones as they speak. Frayn tells me of the problems this has caused with the first French production, now in rehearsal. "The director tried to indicate all the sections that occur in the past with expensives of white table, and eventually the actors rebelled. Michael Blakemore has just gone over to take over."

I mention that the spatial structure of the play seems itself scientific: the three characters behave like particles, often with two of them connecting, while a third observes, or like planet and satellite. Within the play, each character observes the others - especially Margrethe. "He scarcely notices," she says early on of Heisenberg. "I watch him discreetly from behind my expression of polite interest as he struggles on." Frayn remarks: "the play is about two things that were fundamental to these scientists: conversation and observation." That is why, in the original production, Peter J. Davison designed the stage so that some of the audience sat in a bank of several tiers behind and around the many stage areas to heighten the idea of observation. The idea will be maintained, though with fewer rows, at the Duchess Theatre.

"We had a very good six-week rehearsal period on the original production, but, after the fifth week, the actors said 'We've done all we can, but now we need an audience.'"

"Copenhagen" opens at the Duchess Theatre on Monday.

Fruits of going native in Java

Antony Thorncroft follows in the footsteps of the obsessive collector Sir Stamford Raffles

Sir Stamford Raffles is best known today as the founder of Singapore, that whirlpool of successful commerce. It is a legacy that would have surprised him. Raffles was probably the worst businessman ever to achieve high office in the East India Company. His main concerns during his years in South East Asia were politicking, mainly as Governor of Java, and collecting.

He was an obsessive collector, accumulating vast hoards of botanical specimens, animals, weapons,

coins, macks, puppets, games, indeed all the objects that dominated Javanese life in the early 19th century - and now. He sent his finds to his learned friends back in England and in 1859, after the death of his wife, the Raffles Collection ended up, rather grudgingly, in the British Museum. It now forms the focus of the first ever exhibition based on the achievements of this remarkable man.

In Raffles's day an individual could still stamp his indelible mark on large tracts of the globe. For



Painted carvings of men and women portraying the Javanese caste system, commissioned by Raffles

tiger and a champagne drinking bear in his residence while discreetly finding careers for the slaves given to him by local rulers: he always campaigned resolutely against slavery.

If Raffles, the man, has to be squeezed out of the exhibition, so do the politics of the time. Raffles tried to be a good East India Company man and to create profits for his masters, but he always failed; after his premature death in 1826, when his widow asked for a pension, she received a bill from the company for lost revenues.

Some of Raffles's entrepreneurial ventures were bizarre. He opened up a trade route to Japan, sending to Nagasaki an elephant which had to be returned through lack of a docking space. The cargo also included ground-down Egyptian mummies, which were reckoned to be a panacea in Japan.

The consumption of human flesh was something of a *leitmotif* in Raffles's life. He was obsessed by cannibalism among the Batak, who ate alive anyone breaking their sexual taboos. Raffles was loath to admit that his much admired Javanese could be cannibals, so he treated the practice as a local form of capital punishment.

The exhibition is spaciously displayed, with the gamelan orchestra occupying the centre of the room. Like many of the artifacts, it will entrance the few fans. The same goes for the vast array of masks and the splendid case devoted to puppetry; the hairy red-faced puppets were the Javanese take on the British. There is

gamelan music and a video showing a puppeteer at work, and an unusual collection of carvings of men and women which, through their dress, portray the Javanese caste system.

Although built around what survived of Raffles's collection, the man himself is a forceful presence - as are his wives. One of the most affecting exhibits is the mourning bracelet in which Lady Raffles kept locks of hair of her four dead children. Raffles died soon after his return to England at the age of 45 in 1826. It was scarcely a wasted life. As well as Singapore he founded one other flourishing institution nearer home - London Zoo, of which he was the first president. His company may have been disappointed with Raffles, but he served humanity well.

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ARTS

The master of painterly games

William Packer admires an elegant retrospective of the delightfully ambiguous work of Patrick Caulfield

It has become the received wisdom to speak of Patrick Caulfield as one of the most distinguished of living painters, which in the light of a remarkable run of recent gallery shows of new work and now this full retrospective study, may well be true. He is certainly among the most distinctive, if hardly the most widely known. Like Pierrot of the *commedia dell'arte*, his is the calm, impassive, ambiguous presence in the midst of hubbub. In another country, perhaps, he might have flourished more conspicuously, pushed onto the competitive international stage by critics and committees, as was done by the Americans with the likes of Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein - with whose work Caulfield's bears more than a passing, if superficial, comparison: ironical, dispassionate, ambiguous.

But then again, such reticence may well have worked in the longer term to his advantage. Never a fast nor especially prolific worker, and subject from time to time to doubt, indecision and periods of inactivity, he has been free to follow his own path and develop at his own pace. There has never been a production line, a pot-boiler: each Caulfield show, though unmistakable in its Caulfield manner, had its surprises. It is the trajectory of that development that this retrospective traces, with a selection as elegantly economical as the work itself.

Now 63, Caulfield was one of the generation of artists that emerged to prominence in the late 1950s and early '60s, the Young British Artists of the day. From Chelsea School of Art he went on to the Royal College in 1960, a year behind such luminaries as Hockney, Kitaj, Peter Phillips, Derek Boshier and Allen Jones, and with them he soon found himself showing in the "Young Contemporaries", that heterodox, student-selected, much-lauded annual bazaar of an exhibition.

But it was the "New Generation" exhibition, which Bryan Robertson put on at Whitechapel in the spring of 1964, which also included Hockney, Boshier, Jones and Phillips among its dozen painters, that first put Caulfield before a wider public. It is with the work of this period that the show begins. While the differences from his later work are

clear enough, and a few rough edges evident, the essential pre-occupations and practice that were to sustain his work throughout are clearly established. Here we find the apparent, deceptive disregard of surface quality and incident; here the delight in the banal; what Robertson, in his old catalogue note, called "the devalued motif - pictorial matter which... has become either vulgarised or dated, and is now... inert" - a souvenir pot, a post-card view of the bay, a hand in the road. "But each (painting)" he concluded, "has an icon-like solemnity, though ambiguous as a Mona Lisa, and an individuality that sticks in the memory that burr." That still holds true.

He knows how terrible these places are, in all their glory of plush and flock, potted palm and sensible formica

though the solemnity has always had to it, I would say, rather more of the wry and self-mocking than the po-faced quality of the famous smile.

There are few figures in the entire oeuvre - Delacroix's "Greece Expiring on the Ruins of Missolonghi" reduced to the simplicity of a poster; and an homage to Juan Gris, a bored waiter leaning through a hatch. Nor is there much in the way of landscape, which becomes increasingly, if it is there at all, the borrowed landscape and glimpse through the window of the world outside. Caulfield is the poet of the still-life and the interior - of bar and cafe and hotel foyer, of cluttered desk, laid table and buffet display; and of the inferred presence of watcher; perhaps, or passer-through; of the curious privacy of mundane public space.

He is the master of the particular detail that informs the whole, of the shadow cast just so, the glass on the table, the lamp in the corner. There is no painter like him in the evocation of unnatural light. He knows how terrible these things and places

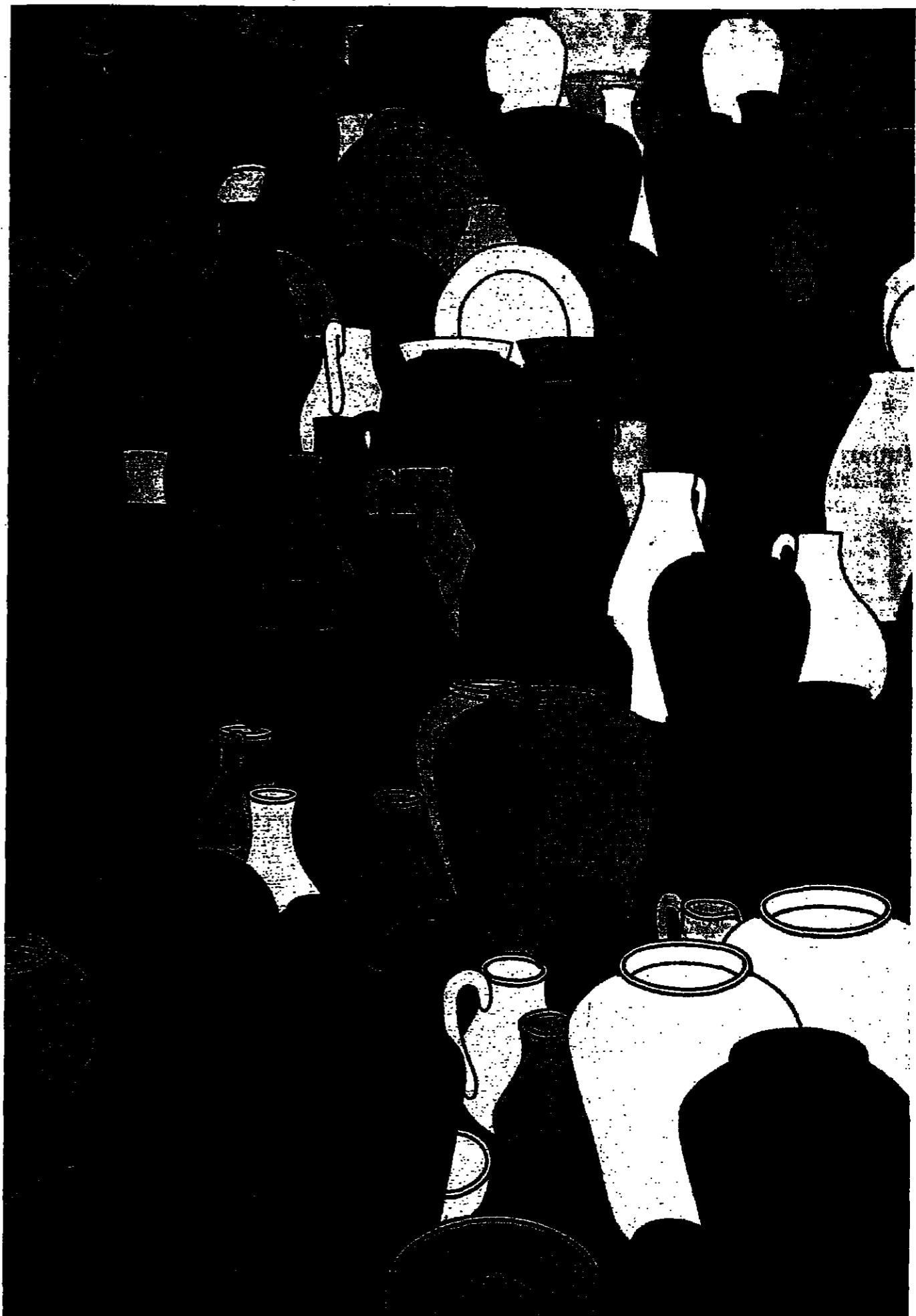
are, in all their glory of plush and flock, potted palms, suky metal, dodgy murals and sensible formica, and how comfortable and reassuring, and he loves them for it.

But it is his way of doing it that is the more remarkable, for behind the so-deceptive mask of apparent simplicity, sits the most intelligent and refined of painters. We may think of him still as the painter of the black, uninflected outline, but it is a measure of his subtlety that we have hardly noticed he has not been working that outline now for some 20 years. Instead, surface and volume, and indeed the pictorial space itself, are now described not by any linear device, conventional or otherwise, but simply inferred by the relative disposition of plane and object - the table-top by the set of the glass, or the napkin laid upon it; the shift from floor to wall by the beam of light from the lamp, and the cast of the shadow.

All this goes on in a space ever more abstracted, as selective and fragmentary as a cubist collage, yet a space and the objects in it that recognise ourselves with a frisson of awful familiarity. We look again, and it is barely more than the flat impersonal surfaces of the paint and choice, impulsive colour. The most recent work is even more schematic and abstracted, a judicious scatter of objects across a colour-field, with perhaps the surface itself disrupted by an arbitrary element of relief stuck on, for the painted image to play with and deny. The painterly games go on, as fascinating as ever.

Patrick Caulfield left school at 15 with no qualifications that today would allow him anywhere near an art school. In his present, true distinction as an artist, he is as fine an advertisement as we could have for the value of an education in art as it once was, followed not for the sake of ersatz diplomas and degrees, but for itself.

The Hayward Gallery, South Bank, London SW1, until April 11, then on to the Musée National, Luxembourg, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon, and the Yale Centre for British Art, New Haven, Connecticut, organised by the Hayward Gallery in association with the British Council: sponsored by Habitat.



Behind the so-deceptive mask of simplicity sits the most intelligent and refined of painters: 'Pottery', 1969, by Patrick Caulfield

Television/Christopher Dunkley

History in our time



Jeremy Isaacs: adult materialist

'Today BBC2 begins the second part of *Cold War*, a series which is huge by contemporary standards: 24 programmes, each lasting 50 minutes, telling the story of power politics, from the end of the second world war to the fall of the Berlin wall. This is grown-up television, as those who watched any of

the first 11 programmes will know. Financed by Ted Turner, the American media mogul who created CNN, it takes the same approach to telling the story of post-war history as was taken by the makers of the exemplary series *The World At War* to their period. This is scarcely surprising given that the man in charge has been the same in both cases: Jeremy Isaacs.

One of the difficulties with such a series is that subjects refuse to fit into neat chronological sections. Thus, today's programme deals with Robert McNamara's famous baby, MAD - Mutual Assured Destruction - the seemingly insane idea underlying nuclear deterrence, and the period covered is 1960 to 1972. That includes the Cuban missile crisis, and some preview writers have already expressed disapproval of the small space in the programme given to this. Presumably they missed Programme 10 which was devoted specifically to the Cuban crisis, the difficulty being that Cuba and MAD didn't happen to cover exactly the same years.

The phrase "adult material" has become a euphemism, but *The Cold War* really is just that, and admirably so.

For anyone in middle age the fascination of these programmes is that they tell the story of our early lives.

Today's programme with its account of the Soviet nuclear test programme in 1961 brings vividly to mind the day when, as a schoolboy, I rose from the gutter outside the Russian embassy in London, where we were protesting against the resumption of testing in the atmosphere, to point out to the firemen, who had been called by the police to turn their hoses on us, that the Fire Brigades Union had only recently backed unilateral disarmament. They drove away.

Programme 14 in two weeks time shows extraordinarily poignant pictures from Prague in 1968, inducing an almost unbearable adrenaline rush as I recalled the night when, as late stop on the news desk at The Times, I had to decide whether to get the hierarchy of the newspaper out of bed as tape reports began to claim that Russian armour was crossing the Czech border. That night we ran an unprecedented number of editions and went to bed believing we could be on the brink of world war three, and might all be dead in 48 hours.

Watching *The Cold War* you experience again the fear that so often entered our lives in those years, but also the sense of right and wrong, us and them, which was then so strong. One of the greatest values of the series is that, with its even-handed approach, it shows that people on both sides of the power divide felt the same. Americans believed they were resisting the evil empire in its drive towards world domination. So did the Russians. We hear from bomber pilots, nuclear submarine commanders, and of course politicians, on both sides, and what they say is uncannily similar: they were acting for the good of mankind, doing their duty, ready to press the button if told to, and to die in the cause if necessary.

The phrase "adult material" has become a euphemism, but *The Cold War* really is just that, and admirably so.

Last Saturday's Radio 4 play commemorated to the day the 350th anniversary of Charles I's execution and was heralded as "total theatre". This, puzzlingly, stemmed from the inclusion of material that actually made it more of a documentary verbatim slices of the "Putney debates" of two years earlier, when Cromwell and the army council thrashed out what to do about king and parliament. The result for all its high intelligence and sense of occasion (produced by both Piers Plowright and Martin Jenkins, two of the most distinguished names in radio) was a hybrid. One could have wished either for dramatic shaping and adaptation or a more rigorous documentary approach with the historical background filled in.

Justice or Murder still made engrossing listening. There was a certain irony in casting the eminent Irish actors T.P. McKenna and Gerard Murphy as prominent Cromwellians; did they reflect on the Protector's bloody deeds that made the next generation's bitter conflict between King James and King Billy - and the troubles of subsequent centuries - so inevitable? The contemporary words of the Putney debates, the king's trial, diaries and correspondence - were interspersed with academic opinion: the real thing, mercifully free of the Jardines, Starkies and their coffee-table talk usually called on by Radio 4.

Margaret Drabble underlined the muscular prose spoken by the army leaders, both magnificently imposing and unashamedly tackling great abstractions, drawing equally on the language of the Authorised Version and the resonance of the playhouse. A Cambridge historian pointed out that the king's trial was illegal: Charles constantly wrong-footed the tribunal, most of the judges who signed his condemnation had not turned up for the proceedings, it was a sham trial of the sort depressingly familiar in our own century.

Charles emerged as per-

sonally a good man, finally devoted to his family (his determination to pass on full prerogatives to his son hampered his freedom of negotiation with his captors), as charming and disastrous as the whole Stuart dynasty, and as obstinately convinced of divinely-sanctioned righteousness as his grandmother, Mary Queen of Scots, with much the same result.

Two years earlier the debate had shown Cromwell came over as a more complex figure than often imagined, sleeping himself in the scripts throughout 1648, seeking convincing precedents in Old Testament prophets destroying unrighteous kings. The awe in which God's anointed was still unwillingly held was illustrated by Cromwell turning white, apparently overcome by the sight of his royal prisoner arriving for trial, the full implication of the world turned upside down sinking in...

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There were vividly human moments: the wife of the

Radio/Martin Hoyle
Revolution revisited

hair and chips of the block as souvenirs.

All this was fascinating, though the production made it sound like a collection of well-enunciated actors sounding actorish. Ironically, the most intense performer, Anton Lesser, sounded too young and lightweight for the fire-breathing parliamentary preacher Peters. There was an odd lack of atmosphere in what should have been crowd scenes, the impression of acting students shouting on cue. But for all its shortcomings, this was an absorbing 90 minutes that prompted reflections on the nature of revolutions where tyrannies become tyrants and old values soon resurface and old orders return. The trouble with revolutions is that they revolve.

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COLLECTING

Penny pictures with all the glitter of gold

Julian Critchley has 26 while the Garrick has 70. If you see one snap it up straight away

It is curious how few people know about tinsel pictures. As they are difficult to find (I have managed to acquire four in the past two years) and not very expensive, they are eminently collectable. I first saw tinsels when I belonged to the Garrick Club. Its first-floor dining room has a long screen on which hang more than 70 such pictures.

Most tinsels are pictures of actors in character, or patriotic in style. Britannia with her shield, for example. Since the Garrick is club with strong theatrical links, it is not surprising that it has managed to corner the market.

Tinsel pictures developed from the "two-pence coloured, penny plain" drawings that became popular in the early 1800s, a time when toy theatres were all the rage. In part they were love tokens. The boy bought the print, usually for twopence, along with strips of metallic, coloured tinsel – which consisted of guns, swords – and other items (including silk scarves) intended to decorate the picture.

The gift was then presented to the girl of his choice, who stuck down the tinsel with glue, probably derived from fir's balsam. Once the print was framed in maple it was solemnly returned to her lover. It then most probably hung in their bedroom for a lifetime.

The giving of these equivalents of Welsh love-spoons lasted, as a craze, for most of the 20 years between 1820 and 1840, when, for no apparent reason, the custom died out. They are now so rare that local antique dealers to whom I have spoken have either never seen, or never sold, one.

The four tinsels I bought recently I spotted in an

antique shop in Worcester as we passed past in the car. I rang later and they were duly delivered; they cost £16 each. I now have 26 in our Ludlow house, which decorate a long stone-flagged hall.

The rare tinsels are pictures of actresses. I have only three women in my collection, plus Britannia.

Among the men are Mr Saville as William Corder; Mr Freer as Alonzo the Patriot;

and T.P. Cook as Newton Forster. Admiral Nelson stands on his own, as does the Iron Duke, both popular as patriots. My other tinsels include Edmund Keen as Richard III (covered with tinsel armour), Mr Parker as Richard Coeur de Lion (almost made of metal) and Mr Hickson as Hans Mordtrenner, who is quite unknown to me.

My tinsels come in three sizes: the standard size,

which is 12in by 14in; six by 8in; and one large tinsel of St David, which is 18in by 14in. That cost me £200 in the 1980s. No doubt somewhere there are matching pictures of St Patrick, St Andrew and St George.

The tinsel prints never

seem to carry the name of

the play but only of the

actor and the printers. Their

frames are not always made

of maple but come in a vari-

ety of woods. In the 15 years

in which I have collected tin-

sels their price has slowly

risen.

Those who wish to see

more must either join the

Garrick or make a pilgrimage to Mr Drummond of 11

Cecil Court, London WC2, who is the main London dealer. Tinsels constitute an

attractive, but almost forgot-

ten part of our folk art. If

you see one, snap it up.

■ Sir Julian Critchley is

writing The Joy of Collecting

for Metro Books.



Long haul: Julian Critchley has spent many years building his collection of tinsel pictures which, because they are both rare and relatively cheap, are much sought after. Most depict actors in character or patriotic heroes and were bought by boys for their sweethearts who would decorate and frame them before returning them as a token of their love

COLLECTING

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Are you sitting comfortably?

Lauris Morgan-Griffiths on collectable contemporary furniture

You know you are getting older when not only is the prime minister younger than you but furniture that has been sat on, bounced on, and eaten off within living memory begins to appear in auction houses.

But it is not only the sofas, chairs and tables that you lived with in the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s; a blink of an eyelid away, 1990s and 1990s furniture is also proving a valuable currency.

Contemporary furniture – post war – is finding a market. If that seems ridiculous to some, similar derision was poured over the first art deco and art nouveau collectables.

Tommy Roberts, owner of London's Soho contemporary furniture shop, Tom-Tom, remembers "taking a Gio Ponti Italian Antelope desk to Christie's eight years ago, who rejected it because they didn't deal in 1950s furniture". Roberts sold that piece for £2,500. Today it would cost about £20,000.

Now the auction houses regularly hold contemporary furniture sales. But it is not only old 20th century furniture.

As much as art is sought for period, style and artist, tables and chairs are considered in the same vein – they reflect a particular time and are designed by a specific designer – Alvar Aalto, Ray and Charles Eames, Arne Jacobsen, Enzo Mari, Gaetano Pesce, Ron Arad, Philippe Starck.

Last year, Bonhams held an auction dedicated to Eames furniture which primarily attracted young professionals, many of whom

had never previously been to an auction.

That there is a definite awareness and appreciation of contemporary design is evident in the proliferation of life style and design magazines, such as Wallpaper.

The Face, Elle, and minefield

– that celebrate hip names, like

Niles of Eames and Stark.

Collector Tom Watkins likes to buck the trend.

Owner of Massive Management (which managed pop bands including The Pet Shop Boys, Bros and East 17), Watkins collects what he likes rather than what he thinks is prime for investment. He has built up a very good kitto Sottsass/Memphis collection.

"I don't think that it has increased markedly in value. I buy them because I love the idiosyncratic form and colours. They are so intricate and made from so many different materials that not many were manufactured.

Some were limited editions of only seven or nine pieces." But as sure as eggs are eggs, the 1980s will cycle back into vogue and be sitting on a gold mine.

For serious collectors it is

important to know the subject: the designer's names; when they were producing and with which company; how large or small the production was if they are still being manufactured. Then one should establish whether the range is in or out of production.

If a piece is still being manufactured, check that it is in the original fabric, or that the item was manufactured at the time of the design – there can be differences between the original

mould and later production runs. It is also an idea to keep an eye open for pieces that have just gone out of production but stocks are still available in the shops.

The puzzling aspect of it all – and a bit of a minefield – is that some furniture being sold at auction is still in production. An older piece with the patina of history, which could – or could not – be slightly cheaper and, in the longer term, more of an investment.

Contemporary furniture – post war – is finding a market. If that seems ridiculous to some, similar derision was

poured over the first art deco and art nouveau collectables.

Tommy Roberts adds to the list Americans Charles Eames, George Nelson and Florence Knoll, and Italians Carlo Molino and Gio Ponti.

Chris Amess and William Richards have caught collecting like a bug. They have built up a social history of more than 100 chairs.

"Key designs – and some not so key" – which they rent out for film and photographic shoots.

The two of them fossick in markets and shops and have found an Ernest Race, 1950s EA chair sitting forlornly on Deptford High Street (worth about £100) and a pair of Finn Juhl dining chairs bought for £4, complete with their original material, worth between £400 and £500 each.

Valuing their collection at about £25,000, they reckon their total outlay has been no more than £2,500.

That old black magic

Do Valentine's cards say Hello? and don't let me go to your hand

Black pearls suggest masters that were in a mood; they are acceptable to the naughty

How to Spend It

That old black magic

**Do St Valentine proud, says Holly Finn,
and don't let red go to your head.**

It is never easy being in love, but it was particularly tough during the reign of Roman Emperor Claudius II. The empire was at war, as usual, and control-freak Claudius had forbidden his Roman soldiers to get engaged or married. He was convinced that, once betrothed, the men would prefer to stay at home with their wives and families than go off and fight.

Whether or not the emperor was correct in his reasoning, his law stood, stymying thousands of Roman inamorata. Until a priest named Valentine took pity on the passionate, that is. Defying the emperor's decree, the priest married desperate young lovers in secret. He was arrested, imprisoned, and beheaded on February 14.

St Valentine's day is not really about bright red, perfectly symmetrical heart-shaped gifts. If the priest teaches us anything, it is that really deep feelings break the rules (and sometimes the neck). It is imaginative and defiant; it does not do what it is told.

So why give your love something samey on the 14th? Why not paint next Sunday another colour altogether. How about black? Think of it like this: a stretch of talc-white sand is lovely, but a beach of pitch black volcanic rock is so much more exotic. Spaghetti's good, but black squid ink linguine is better. Madame X in a crimson dress might have looked fine, but only in black could she have appeared quite so superior.

Now is the time to have dark thoughts. While white, cream or pink pearls are always in fashion, black pearls are from a parallel universe (and also from Mikimoto and David Morris). Strung into necklaces, set into rings, or dangling from diamonds at the ear, black pearls - Tahitian in particular - suggest oysters that were in a mood. They are

acceptable gone naughty.

Art deco rings - of onyx, a few diamonds, perhaps a tourmaline (from Stephen Webster and Geoff Rowlands) - have the look of mischief as well, particularly on long fingers wrapped tight around a black-beaded Judith Leiber evening bag.

with gold lining.
It is not really the surface, but the underlayers that matter - in love and in presents. A set of black lace underwear and stockings are a clear and cunning choice.

But if you are going to buy such a traditional gift, you really have to buy the best.

really have to buy the best.

La Perla lingerie is a name with which any man worth his Y chromosome should be familiar. Nothing compares with the outrageously intricate lace, the flattering cut, the second-skin fit, and the intimate touches (soft felt backing behind clasps so skin is not irritated; but pampered).

Fogal's Fascination stay-up stockings are just as luxe. In Graphite - a lavender-tinged grey-black - these are the sexiest way to swathe a leg.

Black pearls suggest oysters that were in a mood; they are acceptable gone naughty

swoon-worthy — if it is Scharffen Berger, the La Perla of cocoa. Founded in 1990 by a maker of sparkling wine and a physician, Scharffen Berger is a rarity among American chocolate makers: both a newcomer to the art and a producer of highest quality. Its pure dark chocolate bar — 70 per cent cacao — comes wrapped in yellow paper, with foil lining and all the promise of a Wonka Bar. Your love will

True love really does go to great lengths.
MGM's 1902 black and white movie

Ivy - gathered together by Paula Pryke, tells someone you think they are worth more than the standard flor-

ral dozen.

Black food? Everyone adores it, once they have been given a chance to try. And is not chance one of the best presents of all? Everyone's gulped down Sevruga, but a tin of Osetra caviar, 30g, is something else. Only the most steely would be able to stop snuffing eight wafer-thin slices of Black Pig Ham. Also known as pata negra, it is a delicacy that puts the finest, most potent prosciutto to shame. (For a more mussel-y evening, giving the utensil instead of the meal is an idea. A black paella pan suggests heapings of food, and food - as we know - is love.)

If for some reason you are not feeling hardy of heart and the 14th looks to be a truly black Sunday, the "Heartbreak" breakable box might give you a laugh. Choose a gift for inside (key ring, bottle opener, etc), and Stephen Einhorn will build a heart-shaped black box around it. The recipient must then smash the plaster package to get to the gift. It sends a message, certainly. As would sending a Little Black Book from Smythson, perhaps with all the pages ripped out?

Finally, the last word in giving black is literal. Call Cannon's Spa in the City of London (Cousin Lane, EC4, 0171-233 9797) and give your love the absence of light - a gift certificate for flotation. For 45 minutes, he or she will lie in an oversized bathtub filled with seriously salted water, with the door shut, the lights off, mellow music on. In there, you are as buoyant as you would be in the Dead Sea. Even more so afterwards. You are relaxed as a corpse, temporarily, then you come back to life. Three-quarters of an hour in the tank feels like five hours' sleep. One further step in the dark, which love always is: find a hotel room near St Ives, Cornwall for the night before August 11. That Wednesday morning there will be a total solar eclipse. Best seen from the coast, it is the last such black morning that will be visible in Britain until 2030. (A special exhibition called "As Dark as Light" will be on display at the Tate Gallery St Ives, from May 21, 01736 796543).

How romantic, literally to give someone the moon. That is the most St Valentine or anyone could ask for.



True love really does go to great lengths, as revealed in George Miller's 1992 black and white movie *Voyage to the Moon*.

Clockwise from top left:

Welsh slate hand cut paperweights, £34.50 each, by Papyrus, 0171-584 8022; "Sienna" soap, £10 for 3, from Crabtree and Evelyn, stockists: 0171-803 1611; cashmere socks, £49, by Pantherella, stockists: 0116 283 1111; Scharffen Berger pure dark chocolate, \$4 for 3oz, to order: 001 650 866 3300; "Blue steel" paella pan, £11, from Divertimenti, tel: 0171-581 8065; "nu assis" black crystal figurine, £145, by Lalique, stockists: 0171-499 8228; 18ct rose gold tonneau master calendar watch, £11,360, by Franck Muller from Theo Fennell, tel: 0171-591 5000; south sea pearl ring in platinum setting, £4,200, by Mikimoto, tel: 0171-629 5300; Venise coutotte with G-string and suspenders, £88, and balconette bra, £120, both by La Perla, Inquiries 0171-245 0527; white gold and black south sea baroque pearl earrings, £380, by Marguette, tel: 0171-937 2897; inkwell, £299, by Mont Blanc, stockists: 0181 232 3000; "heartbreak" breakable package, £10.50 and chrome heart bottle opener keyring, £11.95, both by Stephen Einhorn, mail order: 0171-359 4977; Little Black Book, £12.50, by Smythson, tel 0171-829 8558; south sea pearl on a rope thong, £700, by Mikimoto, as before; Tahitian pearls with fan shape diamond drop earrings, £87,000 by David Morris, tel: 0171-499 2200; rectangular evening bag in black rhinestone, £635, by Judith Leiber, from Asprey & Garrard, tel: 0171-993 6767; 3 stack calf leather stud box, £220, by Tanner Krolle, stockists: 0171-359 0031; Tahitian pearls with diamond ball clasp, £51,000, by David Morris, as before; diamond and onyx diamond ring, £7,500, by Geoff Rowlandson, tel: 0171-629 5353; black onyx ring set with pink tourmaline and diamonds, £1,875, by Stephen Webster, tel: 0171-486 6575; row of leatherbound mini A-Z, £45, and midi, £65, both by Connolly, tel: 0171-235 3883; black pig ham, £16.25 per quarter pound from Harvey Nichols Food Market, tel: 0171-235 5000; bouquet featuring Calla Lilies and Black Magic Roses, £150, by Paula Pryke, tel: 0171-837 7336; Mont Blanc Meisterstück traveller fountain pen, £259, as before; writing paper with black heart motif, £92.50 for 100 sheets, to order from Smythson bespoke stationery department, as before; 20m tin of Oficinas canister from Caviar Koenig, delivery and order: 0171-493 0879. Photographs by Ian Lee de la Rue

Surrender

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How to Spend It

Throw a pot and have a cocktail

Forget earnest embroidery, says Fiona Murphy. Sotheby's Contemporary Decorative Arts exhibition is the debut party for new and improved crafts

Tree - cosies! The patriarchs of the British crafts movement would thunder with righteous rage if they walked into Sotheby's selling exhibition, Contemporary Decorative Arts. Fitness for purpose, truth to materials, the "ethical pot": where have all the grannies gone?

At this British crafts show, it is clear that the earnest has completely given way to the playful. Honest brown pots have been shoved into the corner to make room for high-tech materials. The public monument has become the personal statement. Instead of sombre textiles there are jewelled scarves for the cute urban sophisticate. Luxury is a bark-warming tree-cozy.

Sales at the Sotheby's show will depend on a glamour that is the antithesis of "crafts" as they have been known. Curated by Janice Blackburn, who worked for many years at the Saatchi Gallery, the exhibition shows a taste not just

for a pretty necklace, but for works verging on art.

The show opens with dramatic scene-setters. Dresses cut from wood veneer - seeming half-tame, half-woman and swelling with life - hang in the entrance. The swirls of wood grain suggest a body beneath, with a faint green coming through the dull gold surface of lacy wood. Victoria Metcalf's garments (£275) are conceptual, based on the dress patterns used by her grandmother when he made clothes for Marlene Dietrich, and are overwritten with barely visible nursery rhymes in Czech.

Throughout the show, clothes - socks knitted in fine metal wire, the perfect Chanel suit made from anaglypta wallpaper (£275) - seem to have a life of their own. Tiziana Bendall-Brunello, for instance, uses antique baby clothes and shoes, covers them in porcelain slip and fires them in distorted shapes (from £1,050). Some have the arched back of a baby in a rage, some are straining to one side.

The jewellery may well be the most popular section with buyers, particularly those who favour maximalist style.

Emma Paolozzi's delicate but profuse festoons of pearls and silver sea creatures on necklaces and bracelets (bracelets £230) have an old-fashioned innocence. Others, like Boshka's fluffy feathered neck collar with sequins and pink pearls bobbing on the end of nylon filaments, called Barbara Cartland 2000 (£130), have a timeless eccentricity.

The glass-makers come closest to creating fine art, to proving that craftspeople are filling the gap left behind by the many artists who now seem to prefer statements over skill. Bruno Romanelli's columns of glass, formed from behind an impression of a man's body (£1,765) and Lesley Wildman's glass and metal horn glittering from inside (£1,500), are pieces of sculpture, as taut and evocative as any in a fine art gallery.

The myth that crafts are all about embroidered aprons has always been unjust. The best craftspeople have been swimming in the same Pop and countercultural waters as everyone else in the arts.

The Sotheby's exhibition is important for snapping a picture of crafts today. The Pleasures of Peace exhibition at the Sainsbury Centre for the Visual Arts near Norwich films crafts in the making. It is the first post-second world war retrospective bringing together important examples of Britain's craft output in the second half of the 20th century.

The passionate commitment and artistry that went into craft is largely unknown and unsung. This exhibition charts not just how the work evolved, from the painstakingly hand-blocked textiles and monumental pots of the 1930s to the ironic self-referential art of the 1970s, but just as important, who commissioned it and why.

It was curator Tanya Harrod's inspired decision to group work, wherever possible, by patrons rather than artists. This focus allows the exhibition to be not just an art show, but an intelligent social history of Britain. It is accompanied by Harrod's comprehensive and perceptive book, *The Crafts in Britain in the 20th Century* (Yale, £45). No one has told the whole story before.

After the rebuilding of Coventry Cathedral (it was completed in 1962), the passion for art in public projects died out of British life and there followed a period of rather restrained good taste.

Craft was now required to be rational and provide inspiration for industrial design.

More fun were the disagreements between potters. The throwers, in the tradition of Bernard Leach, disapproved of the builders like Gordon Baldwin, whose splendid totemic piece is shown, huge with stubby arms, looking like primitive art.

Then Pop Art strikes. There is Perspex jewellery and an



outrageous psychedelic chair wrapped in fluffy multi-coloured stockings by John Makepeace. Harrod's exhibition stops soon after 1971, when the crafts moved emphatically towards fine art. Elizabeth Frisch made "optical pots" in 1975, using the colours of Piero della Francesca and playing with perspective in the surface decoration. David Poston made a necklace/manacle inscribed "Diamonds, Gold and Slavery Are Forever" (1975). But by the late 1980s, Harrod believes, craft had become "treasure".

There is faint condescension in the word. Of course it's true that, for all the shimmer, intelligence and irony of today's crafts, the passion of St Guthlac has been lost. But that shouldn't put you off the Contemporary Decorative Arts exhibition at Sotheby's. For one week, three large rooms are brimming with the best of British craft today.

Clockwise from top
• "Glass Face" in pate de verre, by Eva Ritchie (prices from £450-£525)
• Wooden veneer dress, £375, by Victoria Metcalf;
• Knitted "tree-cosies", from £120-£180, by Freddie Robins;
• "Scarf that wants to become a necklace" in silver, £215, by Boshka.

All from Contemporary Decorative Arts, Sainsbury Centre for the Visual Arts, University of East Anglia, Norwich, runs to April 18 and tours to Brighton and Aberdeen in the summer.
(tel: 0171-293 5000). Runs until February 11.

These jeans are right on the button

Holly Finn delights in her discovery. Hip-hugging and discreet, Earls are the new un-brand

I call it the Pink Panther moment. It's the instant preferences change - like when I suddenly became disenchanted with the cartoon Pink Panther and besotted by the Peter Seller's hilariously human "That is not my dog" version. Same thing happened to me just last week, with blue jeans.

When I was growing up, jeans were not a part of my family's ethic. Canvas, khaki and corduroy were the cartoon I lived with, and loved. Then for a while I tried Levi's and Gap. They were unconvincing. Now I've found genius. Earl Jeans is Peter Seller's.

A friend and I saw a pair of Earls in a magazine. He suggested we trek up to Harvey Nichols and try some on. Veni, vidi, charge it. It's that simple. These jeans are a perfect fit.

"I worked really hard to make them tasteful," says designer Suzanne Freiwald of the £25 stretch variety (98 per cent cotton, 2 per cent lycra) I bought. In them, my legs, which are already long, look 2ft longer. They've got the cavalier cool of a film star who just flew in on Concorde, and the feel of Sunday night in your favourite leggings. Beat that. The colour is dark indigo, the stitching pumpkin-orange.

Internet companies start in garages. Earl Jeans started in a bathroom. Originally from Atlanta, Georgia, Freiwald was

forever in search of the perfect pair of blues: low-slung, slim-cut, and wide enough to slip over her boots. She couldn't find any, moved to Los Angeles and, at her then-beau-now-husband Ben's suggestion, started making them in 1985.

At first, the prototypes occupied a big shelf in the bathroom, but after a month, they spilled out into the living room, dining room, bedroom, and on to the hippest hips in LA - those of actresses Minnie Driver, Heather Graham and Courtney Cox.

Now the jeans are constructed at one of the 30 or so denim factories in and around Los Angeles. Stiff fabric is stitched together, rinsed in cold water with no softener, then dried normally. The result is jeans that fit g-lovely, and \$10m sales in 1998 for a company that started with only \$2,000.

You don't have to sport cowboy boots to appreciate the cut of Earls, and you don't have to be petite. If you're a tall woman, Earls are mama from the West Coast. Despite being only 5ft 5in herself, Freiwald was adamant that the cut be long and narrow. "Short people can hem," she says, "Tall people can't lengthen."

The designer is convinced that women are getting taller, that clothes aren't, and that "big, huge companies just don't care," she says. With the pluck of

the best Silicon Valley renegade, Freiwald blithely pits her company against the biggest names - Guess, Versace - while keeping the business small and close. Her designs and her opinions remain undiluted.

You are not branded when you wear a pair of Earls. There is no swirly stitching on your back pocket, no tag pinned to your rump. Only the single black and gold enamel button above the zip gives the name away. "I just don't like a brand name," says Freiwald. "I think it's kind of cheap, kind of tacky." Good brands put it on the inside, she thinks, bad brands on the outside. "I know what I have," she says, "I don't have to put it on the outside."

From the very start, people sought out Earls. There was no hard sell. There was no catalogue, either; no press coverage, no "imaging". "And people got it right away - from the garment," says Freiwald. "It just emanated its feeling."

And it just keeps emanating in all the right places. Today, Earls are sold in Los Angeles, New York and London. Les Galeries Lafayette and Colette in Paris have them on order.

The indigo jeans, both stretch and non-stretch, are the core of the collection. There are also versions in corduroy and velvet, and this spring Freiwald is introducing black and white



First catch Christopher McNaughton has

Feast for Nicholas Woodsworth lets

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FINANCIAL TIMES

FOOD AND DRINK

Wild food

First catch your squirrel...

Christopher McCooey has been gathering his meals off the road

Hundreds of thousands of wild animals and birds are killed on Britain's roads every year. Most of the victims become part of the food chain eaten by crows or foxes, but, often, there is no reason why the meat should not provide a tasty meal for humans as well.

Whenever it is safe to do so, I always pull over to check out a corpse. Of course, being hit at speed by half a ton or so of metal and glass is not the ideal way of preparing meat for the table. But a quick inspection will suffice to see whether it is consigned to the car boot or the hedge.

Maggots would put me off but not necessarily pecked-out eyes. Maggots suggest death was some time ago, whereas eyes are usually the first things crows remove. A gnaty smell is OK, but anything stronger or more unpleasant is not worth the risk.

Signs of a fresh kill are feathers still blowing about. On

a number of occasions I have actually seen a car in front of me hit a bird. If there is wet blood, that is to say it has not congealed, and the corpse is limp and still warm to the touch, this suggests a recent death. Rigor mortis usually sets in between four and six hours after death.

If you are inspecting an animal such as rabbit, check that the haunch (leg) is firm and has enough meat on it to provide a portion for a meal. If it is a bird, such as wood pigeon, then feel for a plump breast - they can get very thin in winter when food is scarce. Anything scrawny, too bony or with signs of disease or weakness, discard.

Roadkill victims, of course, have not been shot. Lead pellets can put off some people who would otherwise be happy to eat a rabbit or pheasant. Most wild animals, by definition, have led a natural life with a healthy diet of what is available locally. Unlike most other meat, wild

meat is free of growth-enhancing hormones and chemicals - the animals and birds have not been fed supposedly scientifically engineered "animal" feed containing goodness knows what.

They really are rather stupid when it comes to the Highway Code.

Rabbits are killed on the roads year-round, as are squirrels. In the breeding season the females of both species may be milky but that is not to say you or your pets cannot eat the meat. A half-grown rabbit is wonderfully tender.

At the end of the winter, when their stores of hidden nuts have been depleted, squirrels tend to be too scrawny to make a worthwhile meal. Ideally they should be eaten in November as they would have spent the past few weeks putting on fat from eating all manner of good natural food: acorns, chestnuts, apples, berries.

They are harder to skin than rabbits but worth the effort. The back and haunches provide the best meat - there is hardly anything on the front end so this can be discarded or used to make stock. This is how I cooked my last squirrel. The two haunches, still pinned together, were marinated in cider for a couple of hours. Then I fried it gently in olive oil to brown the meat and used up the rest of the oil frying a chopped onion.

The squirrel and onion were then put in a casserole dish and covered with the cider and some thick chicken stock made from the remains of a Sunday roast. I added chunks of apple, potato, carrots and a couple of leeks and seasoned it with black pepper and a bay-leaf and a little chopped fresh garlic.

It was then cooked in a medium oven for an hour. The meat was light-coloured and came off the bone easily; squirrel has a slightly stronger flavour than rabbit but when casseroled like this is delicious.

If the bird or beast has been badly mangled then it is probably best left alone. But sometimes a cut of meat can be saved - a single hind leg of a rabbit, the breast meat of a wood pigeon, for example. I usually barbecue it.

A marinade for barbecue roadkill can help to ensure that the meat does not dry out. One of my favourites has an Oriental flavour, so here it is. Mix half soy sauce with half water (or

white wine or saké). Add a tablespoon of olive oil and some grated black pepper. Crush and grate some root ginger and add this and the juice produced to the liquid with a chopped onion.

Mix well and marinade the cuts of meat in it for several hours before cooking on the barbecue. Baste with the marinade from time to time. Do not baste with olive oil as this tends to drip, causing the charcoal to flare up and scorch the meat.

Roadkills are free meals and, by eating these creatures, you not only honour them but you ensure that their lives were not wasted.



BANX



An elderly man piles harvested olives on to a tarpaulin: a way of life practised for centuries throughout the Mediterranean

Feast for the eyes and nose

Nicholas Woodsworth lets the humble olive sustain him on a journey through Morocco

In the sunny markets of southern Europe, different stalls always draw different customers. Some market-gopers are drawn to neat piles of goats' cheese, some to iced banks of fish, some to colourful pyramids of fruit and vegetables. I am drawn to olives.

At a good olive stand you will have a dozen different types or more, each varying in colour and size and place of origin and manner of preparation. You will also have a cheerful stallholder who will have you taste first this kind, then that.

I like all kinds. Fat and glistening or parched and wrinkled, piled high-and-dry in shallow tubs or lying half-drowned in barrels of brine, few products are as evocative of the sun, soil and soul of the Mediterranean world as the humble olive.

The olives I came across high above the Straits of Gibraltar in Tangier's central market were not really humble at all. With their talent for the subtle use of spices and preserves, Moroccan olive-makers were providing a feast for the eyes and noses of market-gopers long before their olives got

anywhere near a tagine bowl.

The olives - jet black, chocolatey brown, ruddy pink and, yes, olive green - were just part of the appeal.

Pickled garlic, cumin, chilli

peppers, fresh coriander, chopped parsley, fennel and preserved lemon peel were only some of the herbs and spices I could make out in these pungent, highly-seasoned mixtures.

Such tempting morsels easily stood their ground against that tangy *tzatziki*, the anchovy-stuffed olive of Spain. I immediately bought a bag to sustain me during a long drive over the Rif mountains. By the time I had wound my way down into the southern foothills and the dusty town of Taounate, my olives were gone. On the other hand, I had only to look out of the car window to behold more olives than I had ever seen in my life.

North Africa may not have been growing olives as long as some areas in the Mediterranean basin - on its eastern shore the fruit was pressed for its oil for at least 5,000 years. In Roman mythology it was Hercules who, in travelling around

the Mediterranean performing his 12 labours, was charged by the gods with spreading the olive tree.

In fact, it was the Romans themselves who did the job, importing to their colonies the grape and grain as well, and transforming north Africa into a great larder of empire. The spread of civilisation through the ancient world can be traced along Egyptian, Phoenician, and Roman routes of trade in olive oil.

Perhaps so, I thought, gazing about, but this was pushing it a bit far. As far as I could see, descending to the valley bottoms and rising on narrow terraces to the top of the hills, was nothing but olive trees.

There was no other crop growing there - in those rocky and arid hills olive trees were even planted for miles along the highway for their shade. One reason the olive has been so successful over the centuries is that it thrives where other plants will not - fearing only frost, it survives poor, flinty soils, drought-like conditions and minimum human attention. No wonder the farmers of Taounate throw a thanksgiving festival in honour of the olive each year.

On I drove, down into the wide farming valley between the Rif and the Atlas mountains, ever more astonished at the beauty of these sweeping, biblical landscapes.

With their wheat-fields and groves of silvery-green olives, with their stone houses starkly silhouetted on the hillsides, they reminded me of Andalucia, of Tuscany, or scenes near my own home in Provence. All Mediterranean lands share something in common.

But in the Moroccan countryside life has remained simpler, poorer, and closer to nature's basic elements.

Some 25 miles from the ancient imperial walled city of Fez, in the hills above the small market town of Bir Tam Tam, I stopped again by olive trees. Here, I knew, I was seeing a way of life practised for centuries throughout the Mediterranean.

The fields of rust-red earth

before long I was picking olives like everyone else. Even ripe they were hard and bullet-like. I bit into one, and Jamil smiled when I made a face - it was bitter and very unpleasant.

At least two weeks soaking in fresh water and another two weeks pickling in brine and lemon slices," he told me. "That is how my wife makes them." Jamil sells most of the olives from his 220 trees - each yields about 45lb of fruit in the market in Bir Tam Tam. But every year he holds back a tonne or so, some for preparing table olives, but most for pressing for olive oil.

I accompanied him to a nearby hill-top to a small building where Bou Ali, his neighbour, runs the local olive mill. I had expected something old and simple, but nothing as old and simple as this.

Inside, in an atmosphere almost overpowering with the rich and heavy smell of fresh-pressed oil, a harnessed horse was plodding around a deep stone basin. It was harnessed to a boom on the far end of which, attached to a vertical axis protruding from the centre of the basin, sat an upright, 4ft-high millstone. As the horse went endlessly about - I calculated it was making some 50 miles a day without ever leaving the building - a great, sticky mass of olives became more and more finely crushed.

Taking me to the back of the building, Bou Ali showed me the second part of the operation, the pressing itself. This involved not a horse for motive energy but an ancient and massive tree-trunk with one end raised off the ground. In a frame

underneath the trunk lay a stack of shallow grass baskets, each filled with crushed olive paste. When the tree trunk was lowered on a wooden screw and its full weight exerted on the baskets, olive oil began dribbling through their tight weaving and down into a stone tub.

It was a long, slow and not very efficient procedure. There was no hydraulic pressing or chemical extraction, no modern technology. Gazing with a professional eye at the new, still cloudy liquid, Bou Ali told me 200lb of olives gave him only about four gallons of oil. "This is the way we have always done it in the village," he said.

Back at Jamil's simple stone house his wife had brought out a tray of sweet mint tea and the midmorning meal. It was nothing more than *harcha* - flat rounds of unleavened bread, made from the wheat of his fields - and a large bowl of clear, green-gold, fruity-smelling olive oil.

"We could not live without it," Jamil said. I did as he and his family do several times a day - I broke the bread, stirred a piece around the oil for a second or two, and popped it into my mouth. Jamil smiled again. He counts himself lucky - for Moroccan peasant-farmers like him, there is not one staff of life, but two.

■ Moroccan olive oil is almost impossible to obtain in the UK - and airlines are not very keen, for obvious reasons, on carrying litre bottles in your suitcase. For a list of Moroccan olive oil exporters please fax Kellie Stevens at the Weekend FT on 0171 873 3322.

Bookshelf

History at half price

Those interested in historic cookery books, but daunted by the prices of first editions, should take note of two publishers who specialise in facsimile editions.

Prospect Books (tel: 01803 712329, fax 01803 712311) carries a splendid list, including *First Catch Your Hare, the art of cookery made plain and easy*, by Hannah Glasse, the Georgian housewife's Delia Smith, who really did make cooking pleasanter and easier.

As Antony Thorne wrote on January 16 in these pages, a first edition could be worth thousands of pounds. Prospect's facsimile, at less than £22, is supplemented by recipes which the author added to the fifth edition, plus introductory essays and biographical notes.

The company also publishes the erudite food-lovers' newsletter, *Pants Proofs Culinary*, and transcripts of the annual Oxford symposium on food and cookery.

Southover Press (tel: 01273 473038), winner of a special Glenfiddich award last year, has just brought out a facsimile of the first (1881) edition of Beeton's *Book of Household Management*. (Note that it was called Beeton's, not Mrs Beeton's when first published, Mr Samuel Beeton being the publisher and his wife the editor.)

"I thought it was time," says Southover's Ann Bagwell, "to rescue Isabella from all the terrible publications that come out in her name." The facsimile costs £29.99, a sum compared to the first edition volume sold at Sotheby's last month for £1,207.

Philipps Daevport

■ Cooking invariably involves a voyage into the unknown - even the most experienced chefs never quite know how a recipe will taste - but in two new intriguing cookbooks, the physical journeys involved have been extensive, too.

Bernard Lussiana is a classically trained French chef who, after stints in some of his country's top kitchens, took off to Poland four years ago and is now executive chef of the Hotel Bristol in Warsaw. With Mary Pinckaerts he has

the renaissance of

Malinowa Restaurant in the Hotel Bristol, growing Polish pride in their native cooking, and this book are the fruits of Lussiana's journey. It is available from Books for Cooks, Notting Hill Gate, London W11 (tel: 0171 221 1922); The Cook's Bookshop, Edinburgh (tel: 0131 226 4445) and direct from the publishers' sales director, Tadeusz Maciejewski in Warsaw (fax +48 22 651 0373).

Nicholas Lander

■ Growing up in Fort Bliss, Texas, John Thorne's favourite pastime was eating and reading in bed. But this love of food was transformed into a love of cooking when the owner of a secondhand furniture store in Manhattan sold him an old frying pan for 75 cents.

As Thorne learnt to cook he began, from a position of complete ignorance, to question everything he read or was told. One of the great pleasures of reading his *Outlaw Cook* (216, 378 pages), just published in the UK, is that you feel as though you are learning with the author. No condescension or finger-wagging there.

Thorne begins a fascinating journey with a series of enticingly named chapters, such as Meatball Metaphysics, Russians and Mushrooms, Potato Pancake Primer, and On Not Being a Good Cook.

Nicholas Lander

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FINANCIAL TIMES
No FT, no comment.

FOOD AND DRINK

Cookery

Shanks for a lovely memory

Philippa Davenport picks a winning winter warmer

Ham hocks, also known as g-a-m-m-o-n knuckles, are ungainly to look at but they are one of my favourite cuts, full of flavour and sticky with a welcome ratio of fat to lean. They also happen to be blessedly cheap – no mean consideration when you are considering the cost of Christmas and cold weather appetites grow.

Like all pork meats, their deliciousness depends on the provenance of the pig. What you want is a traditional breed; a pig that has roamed happily during an unhurried life, then been dispatched with kindly speed.

Welfare is reflected in eating quality. Cruelty, whether inflicted deliberately or unthinkingly, can cause chemical changes in an animal, and pigment from distressed or fearful beasts can be very disagreeable indeed.

It seems daft that it is legal for British retailers to sell pork produced under conditions that are illegal for British pig producers to employ. And both dotty and unpatriotic that the British army – whose appetite for marching on a traditional egg-and-bacon breakfast is huge – does not buy British but relies on cheaper bacon supplies imported from countries where fewer restrictions are placed on pig production and welfare.

Enough about the pig. My subject today is meant to be lamb. In particular lamb shanks, another cut of which I am very fond, and again a cut that is agreeably cheap.

Shanks are of course the ovine equivalent of ham hocks, the bony extremities of the leg, rich in flavour, muscular and well lubricated with fat. Just right for bringing cheer to February.

Shanks can come from leg or shoulder. They can seem

difficult to buy, but every shop has four shanks, so persist. Some butchers cut the shanks from large legs of lamb to make the leg joints easier to fit into the roasting pan. Others are more ready to cut off shoulder shanks. Ask nicely and an obliging butcher will oblige, but don't advertise the fact to all your friends or demand may exceed supply in your locale, and prices start soaring.

Knowing my great liking for lamb shanks, my butcher regularly stashes away these offcuts in his freezer for me. I collect when half a dozen or so have accumulated, and the Sunday roast is dropped in favour of a sticky braise.

Though it is rich, filling and wonderfully tasty, there is not a great deal of meat on a lamb shank. So it is wise to allow one per person.

There is something very appealing about having a little joint to oneself, like being given a whole grouse, and if an ungreedy member of the family fails to do his or her portion full justice, the cook can always wash the leftovers well afterwards, and make a broth-cum-stew with the bones and meat scraps plus root vegetables, barley and an enlivening splash of cider vinegar.

Rich meat benefits from the addition of something sharpish. With ham hocks, I tend to choose a mustard-based accompaniment. For lamb shanks, I lean towards capers, citrus or vinegar, and the counterfoil of an earthy ingredient as well.

Think of braised lamb shanks with butter beans and caper sauce; lamb shanks with chick peas and balsamic tomato sauce finished with snippets of salt anchovy; or lamb shanks with salt-pickled lemons, spinach and aubergine on a bed of couscous or rice.



Chris Small, of Aldridge Butchers, Ilford, Essex, inspects a lamb carcass

Watering Holes

A pub with the right priorities

Peter Millar starts an occasional, but thirst-quenching, series

In the 18th century churchyard of St Mary's the Victorian founders of the Chipping Norton Temperance Society must be turning in their tombs. What is England coming to? Its senses?

It is bad enough that the teetotalers' meeting hall has been transformed into a theatre, famed for its annual pantomime. But it also has a bar.

Chalk up another round for Mammon. What can you do? The intermission sale of alcoholic refreshments plays an important role in keeping islands of culture flourishing in the countryside.

The ghosts steaming away in the wings may take small recompense from the fact that serious pre- (and post-) theatre tipplers still indulge their vice in the hostelry that once bore the brunt of their wrath: the Chequers Inn, two doors along.

Running a proper pub in a Midlands market town these days, even on the fringe of the Cotswolds, is a tightrope act. It is all very well having the ramblers descend on a Saturday afternoon to massage their thermal socks and order half-pints of shandy and cups of coffee (why is it that only the well-to-do over-ses go for walks en masse?), but that does not help on a bleak Thursday night in February.

There are two obvious routes: both clearly signposted in nearly every small town in the country. One leads to the "foodie pub", little more than a second-rate restaurant in disguise, snifflily scornful of honest drinkers. The alternative is the pool table path, complete with honking flashing slot machine and a juke box belching out either Oasis or Tammy Wynette. Hardly a rural idyll.

The Chequers, miraculously, has escaped both fates. A log fire burns in the grate, a cluster of regulars gossip at the bar: the man from the bank, the chap from the butchers, the fellow in the Stetson. It takes all sorts. The good landlord's achievement is to keep them.

The tables are a magnificent miscellany: long and narrow, like an old school bench – inscribed somewhere, I am sure, with "Fred Ethes" – or round and convivial, squeezed into corners, next to window seats from which to watch the pale winter sun set beyond old stone streets over a frothing plint of bitter.

When I first discovered the Chequers it had a piano player on Saturday lunchtimes. Not some twerp in a tuxedo, or a boisterous Mrs Mills playing honky tonk, but a local lad who might almost have been a customer just wandered in for a spot of practice. He tickled out a medley from Gershwin to Lennon-McCartney to the wines you own (they do not have to be grand), some idea of what you want from them (maximum pleasure, riches beyond the dreams of avarice, something to serve at a special dinner etc), together with a cheque made out to Comic Relief (Wine Relief), to Jancis Robinson, Weekend FT, 1 Southwark Bridge, London SE1 9HL by Red Nose Day on March 12.

One of the chief Wine Relief fundraising mechanisms is a simple guide to the basics of wine called *The Good Nose* written by me. Every leading supermarket and wine retailer will be stocking it and passing on at least 50p of its £1 cover price to Comic Relief.

Please feel free to send a list of the wines you own (they do not have to be grand), some idea of what you want from them (maximum pleasure, riches beyond the dreams of avarice, something to serve at a special dinner etc), together with a cheque made out to Comic Relief (Wine Relief), to Jancis Robinson, Weekend FT, 1 Southwark Bridge, London SE1 9HL by Red Nose Day on March 12.

I reserve the right to return the list and the cheque if I feel the latter is out of kilter with the words entailed by the former. But I am sure, knowing the generosity of FT readers, that it is most unlikely I will have to exercise it.

Jancis Robinson

summer afternoons, but hemmed in on four sides, the moments when the English sun lets itself trapped were all too few. And when it did, the wasps came too.

In the past year, it has been enclosed, with floorboards laid and a glass roof, a loss of some atmosphere perhaps, but the space created acts as an overflow – a pressure valve – for extra eaters at mealtimes.

Food in a pub can be both salvation and ruination. These days the pub trade is more likely to be assailed by fleeting fads. The latest – to which the Chequers has succumbed – is that. But it is done well – duck strips with cashew nuts, yellow bean curry for example.

For those who still expect an English inn to serve English fare, there is fish that tastes as if it has been freshly battered (in the best possible sense) or an impressive plate of roast ham, both served with real chips made from fresh potatoes.

The ham comes with salad green bits – or at my 14-year-old son's insistence – a fried egg on top. All at prices – up to £5.95 – that

Old banks, trading houses and other gems have been returned to the public sector, socially speaking

won't break the bank even for a family of four.

The wines are modest (I would not recommend that my colleague Jancis Robinson find herself marooned there) but the beers are not.

Nor should they be. This is, and I come to it deliberately, a Fullers pub.

The Chiswick brewer, which, with Young's of Wandsworth, bravely flew the flag for the capital when the country was capitulating to keg, has embarked on ambitious expansion in London.

Old banks, trading houses and other gems of Victorian architecture have been brought back into the public sector – socially speaking – as bars. Fullers, the London brewer, is still a relative rarity in the countryside. Yet it also supply a taste for real beer that is neglected in too many areas.

The champion, punch-packing malty ESB and the light, refreshing, still flavoursome Chiswick provide an unparalleled canvas against which to assess quirkiest seasonal delights: the autumnal Red Fox or the deep dark Old Winter, which will soon be making way in its turn for the pale golden springtime Honey Dew. And in the middle of course, is the brewer's flagship: London Pride.

Josh Reid, the Chequers' landlord, the big, bearded man behind the bar, has several times won prizes for the standard of his cellar. The pub has won so many awards in Fullers' own competitions that Josh has been asked on to the company's judging panel.

Pride in the provinces. And why not? ■ *The Chequers Inn, Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire. Tel: 01608 544717.*

Rosy sheer sound of

Annie Wilson

Lamb with lemons, aubergine and spinach (serves four)

fil it with olive oil and brown the lamb shanks all over. Remove them and sauté the chopped onion briefly. Meanwhile scrape the flesh from the pickled lemon, discard it and chop the skin finely.

Stir the bruised cumin and coriander seeds into the onion. Add the whole garlic cloves, sprinkle on the turmeric and chopped pickled lemon peel. Stir in 150ml water plus the pickled lemon juice. As soon as the mixture bubbles up, lay the lamb shanks side by side on top of the onion, and remove the casseroles from the heat. Lay a

sheet of greaseproof paper directly over the meat and cover with a well-fitting lid.

Put the casserole into an oven heated to 180°C (350°F) gas mark 4 and braise for 1 hour. Turn the meat over, cover again and braise for a further 1 hour, this time with the temperature reduced to 160°C (325°F) gas mark 3. Towards the end of this time, wash the spinach; top, tail, part-peel (ie, remove the skin in stripes) and cube the aubergine, and heat a large frying pan.

Remove the cooked lamb shanks to a plate, cover and keep

them hot while you cook the spinach and aubergine (simultaneously but separately).

Sauté the aubergine in olive oil in the hot frying pan, stir-frying the cubes briskly for a couple of minutes, then fry more gently and stir less often, for 2-3 minutes more.

Meanwhile, place the casserole over medium-low heat and let the braised onion mixture bubble

gently for a few seconds. Add half

the spinach, cover and leave for 1-2 minutes until the leaves begin to wilt. Stir them in. Add the rest of the spinach, cover and leave for

1-2 minutes more until the second batch begins to collapse. Then take off the lid and cook, stirring frequently, until the leaves are fully wilted and surplus liquid is driven off.

Quickly and gently fold the aubergine into the spinach, adding a little salt and black pepper. Lay the lamb shanks on the bed of vegetables.

Cover again with greaseproof paper and the lid, and return the casserole to the oven for 15 minutes or so before serving with couscous or rice, to which I sometimes add more finely chopped pickled lemon and a handful of coriander leaves.

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Jancis Robinson

Peace has broken out in a business normally riven by cut-throat competition, the British wine trade. Or if not peace, then an unusual show of unity in support of an initiative launched last Thursday, the intriguingly named Wine Relief.

Wine Relief is an attempt to raise as much money as possible for the biennial British fundraising orgy called Comic Relief, celebrated in the UK by the wearing of red plastic noses.

A cynic may feel it was only a matter of time before a charity focused on something called Red Nose Day linked up with the wine trade, but the emphasis throughout Wine Relief is very much on quality rather than quantity.

Through events and activities bordering on the ridiculous around the last Red Nose Day, in 1997, an impressive 50 per cent of the UK population raised more than £27m for worthwhile projects in the UK and Africa. Wine Relief aims to add its bit to Comic Relief's total for this year's Red Nose Day, March 12.

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Eating out / Giles MacDonogh

Eclectic – so I had the steak and kidney pie

there has been a recrudescence. In the past three or four years restaurants have been popping up like mushrooms, and what is more, they are restaurants of a new, fashionable London type.

The latest is Che, significantly sited in the brutalist Economist Building, which destroyed the Georgian character of the street when it was put up in the 1960s. The name commemorates the man who was everybody's favourite revolutionary at the time. It also

alludes to Cuba, the home of cigars, which are the new restaurant's stock-in-trade.

The journalists are still there, but the restaurant has taken over the front module, which used to be a bank. The designers have bravely tried to incorporate elements of its distinctly inelegant mammonistic interior into the restaurant: a couple of escalators, for example, take you up and down from the dining room and the old, 1960s strip lighting is still there behind the frosted panels on the ceiling. The principal

plea seems to be you cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear.

You are better off inside looking out: the restaurant's best feature is indeed its view, and at first-floor level you look down on all those lordly fuddy-duddies in White's, Brooks's, Boadie's, St James's Palace and the rest.

Naturally the menu fol-

lows the well-trodden eclectic route: around the world in 80 dishes, with a smattering of English standbys. A little plate of vegetables was accompanied by tapenade

and bearnaise sauces. Bread came chiefly with bits and bobs (olives, tomatoes, nuts etc), but there was also decent pain de campagne.

My guest came from another place with a foggy atmosphere: the Opera House. Che, with its minimalist, 1960s lines, must have made her feel at home; it was like so many recent sets – or lack of them – in this sad phase in the history of the House. She ordered a dish of caponata, where the usual Mediterranean vegetables had been joined by some

grilled haloumi cheese, and pronounced it good.

I had a little pat of mashed potato with some slices of caps on top. The mash was properly sodden in butter and oil. I also tried a timbale of dressed crab which had been touched by the orient: there was coconut milk in the dressing.

My orient had more than touched my friend's main course. She tucked into a Thai green curry which came in some elegant faience bowls. As I was in Clubland, I opted for steak

and kidney. It was a model of a complex of rooms at Che. There is a trendy bar at ground-floor level, and somewhere (I never discovered where), there is rumoured to be a foggy room where gentlemen (maybe even the odd lady) puff on huge hookahs and tingle at snifters filled with cognac.

Ah! At least one side of life in St James's Street has not changed.

■ *Che, 23 St James's Street, London SW1. Tel: 0171 747 9392. £30 à la carte before wine.*

JOHN GO 150
PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID ARMED

pub with the right priorities

starts its occasional
Quenching series

Jill James

TRAVEL

Scents and sensibilities

Jill James follows her nose for a delightful day in Paris

I am easily excited. Railway stations, for example, never fail to send a frisson down my spine.

Even Waterloo, on a wet, wintry London morning, has the muted thrill of the unexpected. Teeming commuters, families with enormous, cheap, bulging suitcases. Eurostar signs to Brussels, Lille and Paris.

I swear I would know which country I was in simply by the smell of its railway station. London I always associate with stale food smells and diesel fume. Frankfurt with engine oil and the acrid smell of overcooked sausage. And Paris – ah, dear Paris. My nostrils have always linked Gare du Nord with fresh coffee and the whiff of expensive after-shave on unshaven Frenchmen.

Naturally, given the chance, I like to follow a different kind of scent. Guerlain for the most part. Givenchy and Chanel if you must. If you want nice smells you must go to nice places.

So I decided, one wintry wet week last month in London, to follow the scent of money. All the way to Hôtel de Crillon in

Paris, that most haute of palace hotels.

I long ago gave up the search for the "real" French travel experience. In practice, it usually meant trying to get on speaking terms with the local *hôtel* in a bar somewhere. Now all pretence of a Bruce Chatwin-like search for the meaning of life through travel has been abandoned. These days I just want to enjoy myself – in nicely smelling surroundings.

So it was that I found myself disembarking at 12.30pm in Paris after catching the 8.23am from Waterloo. A driver was waiting on the platform to whisk me, and my husband, to our destination.

My first sniff of the hotel was promising. I came in with Miss Dior and Kan Savage and was greeted by Pascal Bonnard, the fragrant and charming restaurant manager.

The Crillon dining room is easy not only on the nose but on the eye as well. Even winged silver cherubs and velvet chairs become things of beauty when combined with less conspicuous wealth and knowledgeable young men ready to attend to your every whim.

Glasses of champagne were brought while we perused the *menu d'affaires*, an altogether series title than the English "business menu" and the wine list. This, for some reason, reminded me of the big, lethal, leather-bound volume that was the star turn in *The Name of the Rose*.

It was only after much discussion with the sommelier that we settled on a wine that would carry us through all our various courses. Described by the wine waiter as *très spécial* – and by me as an absolute stunner – we ended up with a

a touch of fennel-flavoured *crème fraîche* simply presented on a layer of coarse sea salt – a delightful surprise.

The first course proper, a leek terrine with truffled aspic and a fresh herb vinaigrette, was followed by scallops on a bed of endive with the most intensely flavoured chicken jus.

My husband, radiating bonhomie and a hint of *ingrangs* Shaving Cream, tackled the pigeon with confit of radish and grilled ratatouille.

Then the olfactory experience became almost too much. A cheeseboard with perfect cheeses was brought to the table. We settled on a princely Reblochon, a St Félicien of impeccable ripeness and a noble Cantal. A *perre strudel* and an iced trifle with fresh thyme, melted chocolate ganache and crystallised violets followed.

A business menu indeed. No

bottle of Lucien Crochet's 1995 Sancerre, a *vendange tardive* wine that is made only if the vintage permits, the previous year 1990.

Not one, not two but three *cruzeilles* followed, with the final mouthful – sea urchin stuffed with caviar in aspic and

wonder so many company bosses want to relocate to Paris.

We glanced at our watches and decided to forgo coffee since it was by now nearly a quarter to four. We bickered a bit about whether to go on a *bitoux mousse*, since the day was clear and sunny, go to the Louvre, which is very close to the hotel, or potter about in the Jardin des Tuilleries. In the end we settled for an hour or so in Les Galeries Lafayette, Paris's favourite store.

That is to say I went shopping, in the gourmet food department, while my husband drank his coffee in the sixth floor café. Weighed down with bags, I met him there 1½ hours later. A bit of a comedown from the Crillon you might think and an odd way to end the day. But I'll let you in on a secret: the self-service café has a great view of the Eiffel Tower and, at teatime on a winter's afternoon, you can

watch the sun set behind it. So, pleased with my purchases of French cheeses, hams, butters and sausages – all of a different quality and provenance from anything you can obtain in England – we hailed a cab. It is at this point, when all your senses are

indulging in being part of another city, if only for a day, that you realise the wisdom of following your nose.

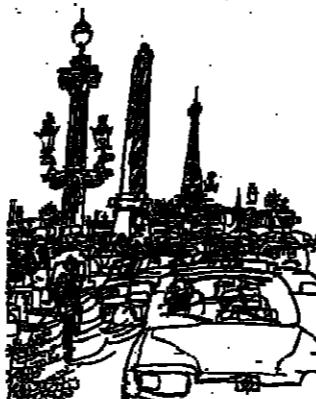
Jill James's day trip was arranged by Ted Wake of Kirker Holidays. Tel: 0171-231 3333, fax 4771 or e-mail:

cities@kirker.ltsnet.co.uk

■ He can do the same for you at £299 a head. In addition to the Crillon lunch and a half bottle of champagne, the price includes first-class London-Paris returns on the Eurostar, drinks and two meals on the train and transfers.

You probably won't want the meals if you're eating at the Crillon. However, early risers might manage Eurostar's breakfast of croissants, bread rolls and smoked salmon.

If you mention the Weekend FT Kirker might even throw in a *bitoux mousse* ticket, too.



Skiing

Rosy sheen over the sound of silence

Arnie Wilson finds a superb combination of sunshine and fluffy powder when heliskiing in British Columbia

The snow was perfect. Cold, dry and deep. As we plimmed down Notre Dame, a constant stream of powder sprayed my face. Like a garden sprinkler, my skis were delivering "face-shots" from top to bottom.

Half way down, our guide, Grant Statham, suggested we stop and listen to the emptiness of the Cariboo Mountains. Pulsed above the valley and facing huge, mist-shrouded monoliths of granite we listened. In seconds, the sound of silence had become almost uncanny. I felt privileged to be there.

I had not been expecting anything particularly remarkable from a small heliskiing operation called Crescent Spur. I was told the food would be good, the lodge warm and attractive, the groups small (a maximum of 14 guests are split into two groups), the cost reasonable, the people friendly and the skiing as good as any – an attractive combination.

Add astoundingly good snow, however, and the experience becomes unforgettable. Even the guides became excited. My journey into the British Columbia wilderness had started in Vancouver with a magnificent view of the Coastal Range, courtesy of Scary White.

Odd name for an airline captain, I had reflected. "Did he really say his name was Scary?" I asked Nancy, the stewardess on the short flight to Prince George. "Well, that's what I thought," she said. "I'll go and ask him." I gazed out at the mountains. The early morning sun was sending deep, black shadows across the peaks.

Nancy returned from the flight-deck of the Canadian Airlines Fokker F28 with a broad grin. "It's Gary," she said. It still sounded like Scary, even when she said it.

Nancy followed my gaze out of the window. Mount Waddington, at 13,186ft British Columbia's highest peak, shimmered on the horizon.

"First time we've had a view like this for a while," she said, her eyes mirroring the piercing sunshine, reflecting from the vast snow-drenched mountain range. "It's been grey from here to Whistler for days." It augured well for Crescent Spur.

"Pretty decent weather in Prince George," said the captain as we came into land. "But the temperature is minus 27." The cold air stabb'd at my earlobes as I hurried towards the airport shuttle.

"If you want Crescent Spur, it's right across those mountains," volunteered our driver, Tom O'Brien. "It'll be pretty damn cold, too." Soon Doug and Donna Bend were driving me the final 100 miles of my journey. After picking up supplies, Doug could not wait to get out of town. "Us country boys and traffic don't mix too good," he said.

After about 50 miles, we passed Slim Creek. "The last little bit of civilisation," said Doug. "All these tiny places started out as sawmills. Most of them closed down and a lot of places became ghost towns."

On the horizon, the Rockies were starting to turn pink. Even the endless carpet of spruce and pine had acquired a rosy sheen.

Appropriately, for my first visit to Crescent Spur, a wafer-thin moon rose high above the wilderness.

"We'll just have to shoot a few holes in the sky," said

At Crescent Spur I was greeted by the owners, Mark and Regina Aubrey, their daughter, Bryna, and Osa, an Australian sheepdog. Osa is here to help keep the bears away in summer.

Mark is also the chief guide, started the operation six years ago from a delightful timbered lodge that was once his family home. Some of the clearings we were to ski through were partly his handiwork. As a youngster he worked in the area as a logger himself.

It was at the top of Toothpick – so called because a forest fire some years ago has left charred trees and stumps sticking out of the snow – that André illustrated the full extent of his calm skills. By the time he had unloaded us, a dense bank of mist had shrouded the mountain. He took off almost blind, hovered for a full minute or so and then picked out some trees in the gloom to guide himself out until he found clear skies again.

Later he came back for more, dropping us off at the same cloud-covered peak. We finished with Plastikos, apparently named after some plastic surgeons who enjoyed the run, and a reprise of Ya Baby.

Back at the lodge, chunky Pacific smoked salmon and cream cheese awaited us, followed by a hearty and tasty dinner prepared by Crescent's chef, Jody Hollman.

■ Arnie Wilson's visit to Crescent Spur Heliskiing was arranged by James Orr Heliskiing, 0171-483 0300. He flew to Vancouver and Prince George with Canadian Airlines (reservations 0171-745 5000), which offers daily scheduled flights from London Heathrow. In Vancouver he stayed at Canadian Pacific's Hotel Vancouver, 900 West Georgia Street.

For five days our two groups – including an unusually high number of first-time heliskiers – would have skied ourselves into the ground if we could have found it. Instead we tried snowshoeing in deep snow. But it was our day in Quartz Creek that really took our breath away.

For run after run we floated almost weightlessly in the lightest and deepest of powder. "It's like skiing in fluff," someone said.

Sunshine was a heart-warming bonus. Yet at dawn the weather had looked grey and murky and it had started to snow. Not ideal for flying helicopters.

"We'll just have to shoot a few holes in the sky," said

Atmospheric conditions at the top of the mountain were perfect for heliskiing. The snow was fluffy and powdery, making for easy turns and smooth descents.

As we descended, the landscape changed from a vast expanse of snow to a mix of snow and rock, with patches of green vegetation poking through here and there.

The views were spectacular, with the jagged peaks of the Canadian Rockies rising majestically against the backdrop of a bright blue sky.

As we landed, we were greeted by a team of guides who had been waiting for us.

They helped us with our equipment and showed us the best lines to ski down.

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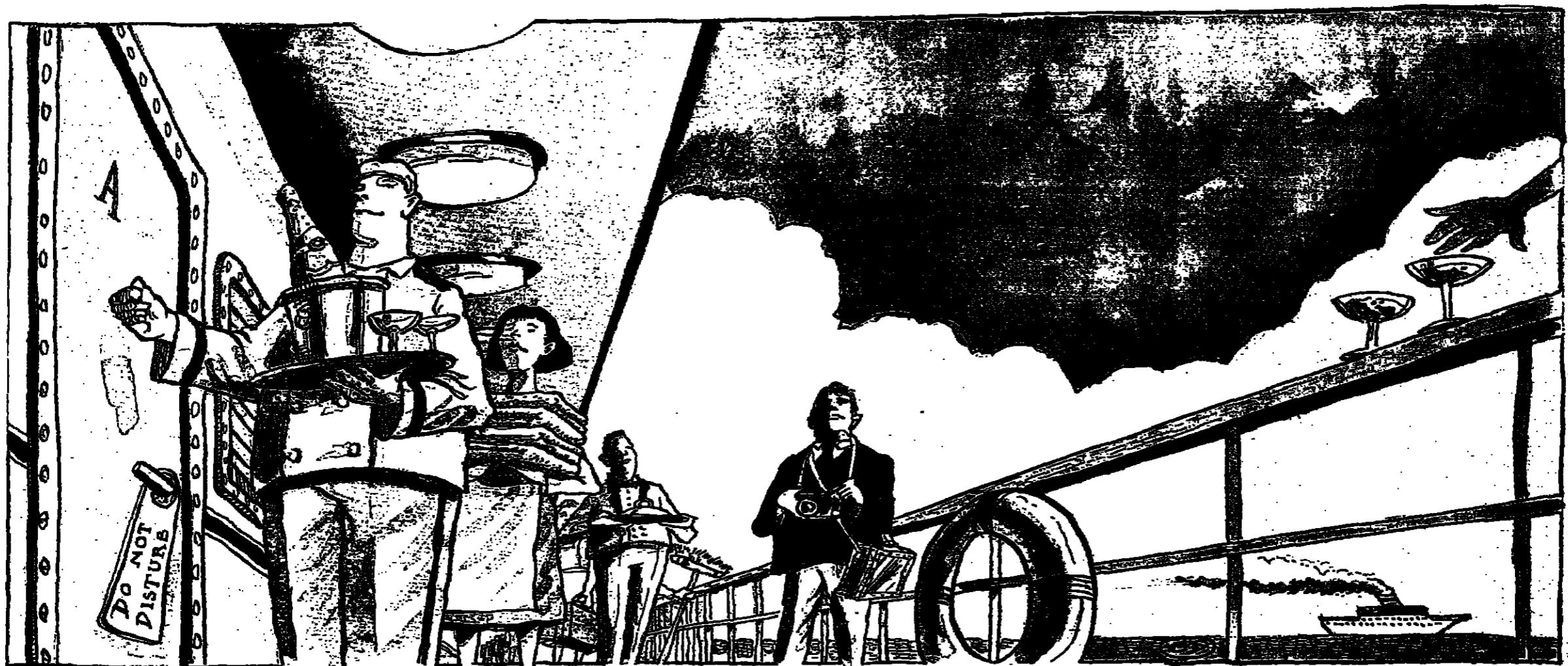
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TRAVEL



How I gave myself to sensual pleasure

A black porter squatted on the dockside, smoking. From his perch on a broken trolley he seemed to be staring straight into the ship's cabin, his eyes fixed on the champagne which poked out of its aluminum cooler on the table.

I wanted to open the bottle but was ashamed to do it in front of him. A rookie cruiser, newly embarked at Fort Lauderdale on one of the most expensive boats afloat, I was confused by the onset of sudden luxury; there were no fewer than 42 wooden hangers in the walk-in closet.

I hoped there would be other passengers like us, new to the role. I said to my wife as we hung over the rail on the upper deck that evening. We were still clasp-champagne glasses and watching the embers of an infernal sunset which smouldered behind Florida's flat coastline.

To get on a ship, however luxurious, with a load of rich strangers in order to go nowhere in particular had always seemed to me the dullest way to spend one's free time, even if one could afford it. The horrors of nautical con-

finement have been described by Somerset Maugham in his short stories and by Katherine Anne Porter in her novel *Ship of Fools*. Even Mark Twain's *The Innocents Abroad*, a hilarious account of Americans on a Mediterranean cruise in 1867, was a kind of warning.

So it was a shock to find the other passengers (most of them) so agreeable. It was an even bigger shock to discover that, once you get the hang of it, cruising can be a lot of fun.

We quickly made friends with the couple from New York whom we first met at the afternoon muster. This paradise, I later discovered, was not just to show us what lifeboats look like. It was to let the ship's photographer take pictures so that the crew could practise overnight putting faces to our names.

We soon got to know the Reluctant Batter, a frizzy-haired skylark from California with a smiling husband who recounted, in dramatic *sotto voce*, how she had

been caught on a sunbed when the fire-bell rang and 160 crew turned out to gaze on her nearly-naked person.

Some passengers we met much later in the 10-day voyage round the Gulf of Mexico. The Three Graces - one blonde, one brunette, one auburn - were lifelong friends who had saved for a reunion trip and had left their men behind. I had not been aware of the Southern Belle until she appeared on our table the final night with her alabaster skin, blonde hair and Alice band. Others we never met at all; they kept to their rooms for the entire trip.

Naively, I had supposed that cruising was a bore. But it is a bore only if you do not learn the secret I learned from an expert who has hundreds of seaborne dues to her credit. It is this: the less you put in, the more you get out.

Doing nothing is not altogether easy. But on a vessel like the Seabourn Pride, which charges

between \$700 and \$3,000 a person a day, you have to learn to give in, to submit to the pampering like a man - or a grown-up baby.

Allow the waiter to carry your breakfast plate to the table. Let him call you "Mr". Order caviar

and champagne in the cabin before dinner. Lie around with a book or video from the ship's library. Crawl on to the dreaded sunbed. Your only task is to study carefully the dinner menu which arrives each morning - for the food is truly sensational.

I knew the do-nothing policy was correct when we visited the

gym one morning and found only one other couple in there. Therefore eat too much, drink too much, sleep too much. Nothing less than total abandonment to sensual pleasure will suffice.

For all these reasons, the true connoisseur prefers uninterrupted ocean crossings. My confidante, an Englishwoman (most Seabourn passengers are Americans), told me she rarely disembarks even when the ship calls at exotic ports; and she was as good as her word when we put in at the Yucatan peninsula, New Orleans and Key West. "If you want to keep getting off, you might as well take a bus," she said curiously.

She advised me also to avoid on-board games and lectures. Evening shows were OK, at least until you knew all the songs and jokes. She was wrong about the lectures, however. For we were intrigued by the talks of Jon Lomberg, an astronomical artist and friend of the late Carl Sagan, who designs messages for aliens

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and our remote descendants. He told us how to look for the Green Flash when the sun disappears over a clear horizon.

The only time I saw our hard-core cruisers bleach was when they were told to pack and unpack, and will stay on board for months in order to avoid it.

The only snag about this, explained my lady friend, is that it can be tough finding enough outfits to dazzle the company for 84 nights in a row.

A cruise ship is a hotel on the move with servants more tolerant of your little foibles than the staff you left at home. One woman, on board for a five-month stint, wanted milk and cookies at 5.30 every morning and her make-up put on by the stewardess. Some passengers demand a box of Kleenex at every corner of the bed. Some have a thing about how their shirts are folded. A few of the very oldest, I heard, are deposited on board by people looking

strangely like lawyers, and act all at sea from the start. But who is going to quibble when these are the kinds of people who think nothing of signing a credit card slip for \$800,000, in advance?

The Seabourn Pride, like her sisters Spirit and Legend, are small and stylish ships, with a capacity of only 200. They are a tenth the size of monsters such as the Grand Princess, at which we gawped on the way out of port. The world's biggest cruise vessel looked nothing like a ship - more an apartment block which had fallen into the water.

On the way home we visited Miami's South Beach and lunched at the superdry Hotel Delano. It was smart, you could tell, because on every table people were talking on the phone while they chewed. It was smart all right. But now we knew better.

■ Christian Tyler was a guest of Seabourn Cruise Line, which sails the Americas, Europe and the Orient. Double cabins (suites) from \$1,300 per day. For UK inquiries call 01703-716534. In the US ring +305 463 3000.

Cruise news

Sailing through two millennia

If true exclusivity for the next 1,000 years is your plan, what better way to kick off the millennium than with a \$3.5m yacht charter?

The boat in question is the 100m (328ft) Christina, on which Aristotle Onassis wed Jackie Kennedy. It has recently undergone a \$20m refurbishment.

For the millennium, it's available to the highest bidder - minimum offer is \$3.5m for a month's charter, starting on December 15. Eight people have already matched that, so you might have to dig deeper. As for where to stage your celebrations - the seven seas are at your disposal.

Bids for Christina Yachting: +30 1 42 80 889.

Perhaps you would prefer something a little closer to land? The Pride of Bilbao, the largest ship to pass the Thames barrier, sails from Dover to Greenwich on December 31, so passengers can toast the millennium by the 0° meridian.

It will stop there for 30 hours, giving you time to watch the mega-fireworks from the decks (champagne provided), or take in other celebrations near at hand.

For those staying on board, there will be a five-course black-tie dinner, live music, disco and dancing all night.

This will still be an exclusive business; it carries 2,000 passengers, but for the occasion will have only 800. Prices range from £785 to £1,045 per person. Call

Bridge Travel Service: 01992-456570.

If you would rather be somewhere further east, try the Millennium Cruise on the Deutschland, Peter

Delmann's plush new cruise liner, liberally decorated with his art collection. Carrying 600 passengers, it leaves Singapore on December 21; January 1 will

be spent in Hong Kong. The 19-day cruise costs from \$4,776. For details: +44 0171-435 2331.

John Westbrooke

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THEIR VIEW

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Rolling along with Rudy in the nude

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TRAVEL

Rolling along with Rudy in the nude

That's entertainment on the ocean wave, says Bill Glenton

Cruise passengers get treated to a rich variety of entertainment – anything from spectacular shows to the dainty delight of flower-arranging. Yet nothing quite matched the performance staged for the benefit of more than 800 aboard the Marco Polo.

An open, pitching deck in a choppy Indian Ocean was an odd enough place to be given a wine demonstration by a personality more familiar in the stable surroundings of a TV studio. Even curioser was seeing wine pundit Jilly Goolden appearing with a naked Rudolf Nureyev.

It has to be noted that she had her back to the famous dancer – and one could hardly describe it as erotic – not unless you get switched on by life-size nude statues.

It was, however, a kind of role reversal. While Jilly had to be pretty nifty keeping her feet on the rolling sun deck, Nureyev remained firmly fixed, in decorative pose, on his plinth overlooking the ship's pool.

As the bubbly presenter was discovering, a sturdy pair of sea legs is as vital as knowing vintage claret from plonk when it comes to shipboard lecturing. But this appearance, at least, proved much less of an ordeal than an earlier demonstration in the ship's theatre in stormier conditions.

Although she twice had to break off with seasickness, Jilly bravely battled on to the end.

Her co-presenter Nick Nairn, another TV star, displayed a stronger stomach. Yet even he had a tough time proving his reputation as a "Ready Steady Cook" by keeping himself and his pots and pans balanced in the ocean swell.

Thankfully, on the 16-day voyage from Mombassa to Cape Town via the Spice Islands, there were far more stable periods. Goolden told me: "Appearing in a cruise ship has its advantages over being in a studio – it's a great opportunity to meet viewers and really find out what they want to know about wine." It was clear, too, that the passengers reciprocated in kind. Being able to share a table or adjoining deckchairs with television personalities adds an extra gloss to a cruise. It is a big reason why so many lines now carry well-known lecturers and theme their itineraries.

Lectures are also a handy

way of filling gaps in entertainment during full days at sea. But there is always the year that rough weather or, equally, the greater lure of sunbathing, will deplete the talk of an audience.

No such worries on this trip. Jilly and Nick packed them in. Having passengers with good sea legs is an advantage – many elderly people suffer less from seasickness. And the majority in the Marco Polo were certainly mature in years.

It is the over 50s and 60s with time and money to spare who inevitably dominate the longer, more distant winter cruises.

The old-comrades' atmosphere was emphasised in the club-like decor aboard. But, unusually, this cruise was a rare shipboard example of an Anglo-American alliance.

In most cruise vessels today Britons form only a small proportion of the passenger list. US citizens are by far in the majority. The number of ships with mainly UK passengers on board is comparatively small. Unsur-

nally, the Marco Polo is marketed equally in the UK and the US. Until recently British-owned, she is now operated by the US-based Norwegian Cruise Line.

Fortunately, the blend of nationalities aboard proved a happy balance.

The ship's lifestyle has certainly changed from the time when this traditionally designed vessel, moderately large at 20,000 tons, was operated by the Russians, first as a transatlantic liner and then as a cheap and cheerful cruise ship for Australians.

Bought eight years ago by Orient Lines, then British-owned, from the cash-strapped Russians, the ship was totally refurbished. As well as improving accommodation, a lot of artwork – hence the Nureyev statue – was added.

The ship is a blend of the popular and the more exclusive. It tries to link the bingo and bridge classes. On this trip it worked quite well.

There is enough space and range of amenities both on deck and below – from card room to casino – for all to find their level.

Marco Polo, in its twin role as an expedition ship, carries a fleet of small boats

Marco Polo has both better quality outside cabins and smaller inside ones. There is a choice between a well-serviced restaurant and a free-and-easy cafeteria. It would score more points, however, if the former had just a single sitting and not two, rather noisy, sittings.

What really helps make her so popular are the exceptionally interesting worldwide itineraries – fairly unusual for a ship of its size. Throughout the year it cruises from the Mediterranean to Africa, Asia, Australasia and South America.

The star route is the circumnavigation of Antarctica.

It is the largest ship to visit the ice-bound continent. For different chillier reasons, the Russians man the hull ice-strengthened so the ship could double as a cold war troopship. For more peaceful purposes, Orient Lines added a pad for helicopters to make sightseeing flights.

In its twin role as an expedition ship, Marco Polo also carries a fleet of Zodiacs, small boats which put passengers ashore in remote places. Wet landings can be fun when suitably clad but are damper in more ways than one when you are not. Such was the case for some when the ship made a maiden call at the smart resort of Plettenberg Bay, South Africa, when a problem with the landing stage led to a surf-tossed disembarkation on the beach.

On a winter sunshine cruise such as this, upsets disappear as fast as raindrops on a hot tin roof. Not even the memories of choppy days at sea linger when a cruise ends in a port as beautiful as Cape Town.

However, even Table Mountain took second place to the city's newest big attraction – the vast V and A shopping centre, which lured many of the passengers.

At least that intrepid shopper, Marco Polo himself, would have approved – even if Nureyev remained coldly indifferent.

■ This cruise costs from £1,550 to £6,750 for the first person in much of the accommodation with a half-price charge for the second occupant, return flight included.

For details of other cruises contact: Orient Lines, 38 Park Street, London W1 SPE Tel: 0171-403 2500, fax: 2510.

Bill Glenton flew with South African Airlines to Johannesburg with domestic onward routing to Durban. Flights of up to twice a day from London cost from £580 economy class. For more details call the airline on 0171-312 5002.



Beware the seductive song of the cruise company sirens

Choose the right deal and you could end up with a bargain and an exotic trip, says Bill Glenton

As Odysseus knew when he tied himself to the mast, you cannot be too cautious about seductive siren calls when cruising. Believe all those brochure boasts about the cruise because the air fare then forms a smaller percentage of the total cost. Sharing a short cruise with a resort stay also achieves the same benefit.

If there are flights of fancy it will pay to indulge in when booking that high seas vacation in 1999. Choose the right fly-cruise deal and you can enjoy one of many more exotic, tropical cruises for less – sometimes a lot less – than you pay for sailing closer to Britain.

Most cruises today involve flying to a foreign port. More than 80 per cent of UK passengers book fly-cruises. A high percentage, however, will suffer poorer value for money because of peculiar contradictions in the pricing of the air content.

Yet this is only part of the explanation. Another important reason lies in the dominating influence of Americans on cruising worldwide. They form three

quarters of all passengers, with most lines based in the US. What Britons pay is often determined there and is frequently fixed according to American demand. This creates a swings and roundabouts situation. British travellers benefit from the low rates paid in the US for cruises on its doorstep but suffer because of the higher charges made for Americans coming to Europe.

The takeover of European lines by US interests has magnified this. Cunard has now been merged with the giant Carnival Cruise consortium, which has also bought into Airtours and its cruises. The big Italian firm Costa is another to be swallowed up into a US company. None of this appears to have damped the boom in cruise bookings in the UK, although much of that results from the increase in cheap mass voyages offered by package tour operators. With most lines increasing fares only slightly and some even reducing rates a little in 1999, demand could be maintained.

But with the threat of a recession, money-saving will be more important. Advantage should be taken of the discount deals offered by most companies – mainly for advance booking. These tend to be about 15 per cent but some are higher. Readers seeking top-quality cruises should also look for those that include tipping, drinks and tours within the fare.

The most seductive siren calls in 1999, however, will undoubtedly be the appeals to fly farther to more exotic seas in search of that "dream holiday". Flights of fancy will rarely have proved so well worth taking.

1999's average daily cruise rates

Days (2)	Ship name	Gross tons	Company	Rates (£)	Ship name	Gross tons	Company
500-575	Southern Legend	8,975	Southern	150-175	Holiday	70,367	Carnival
	Southern Pride	8,975	Southern		Enchantment of the Seas	74,137	Royal Caribbean
	Southern Spirit	8,975	Southern		Fascination	70,367	Carnival
	Sea Goddess I	4,200	Oceania		Grandeur of the Seas	73,600	Royal Caribbean
	Sea Goddess II	4,200	Oceania		Inspiration	70,367	Carnival
500-525	Holiday Princess	2,112	Holiday		Inspiration	70,367	Carnival
500-500	Seven Seas Navigator	50,000	Radiance		Mariner	47,000	Festival
	Silver Wind	16,927	Silversea		Nordic Empress	48,593	Royal Caribbean
	Crystal Symphony	50,302	Crystal		OceanPrincess	21,468	Premier
	Silver Cloud	16,800	Silversea		Pearlstar	70,367	Carnival
500-450	Prima	28,000	Rhapsody		Royal Star	5,360	Star Line
	Seven Seas Mariner	8,232	Radiance		SailPrincess	21,000	Premier
	Seven Seas Mariner	8,232	Radiance		Serenade	70,367	Carnival
	Seven Seas Mariner	8,232	Radiance		Serenade	70,367	Carnival
500-400	Prima	28,000	Rhapsody		Serenade	70,367	Carnival
	Seven Seas Mariner	8,232	Radiance		Serenade	70,367	Carnival
	Seven Seas Mariner	8,232	Radiance		Serenade	70,367	Carnival
	Seven Seas Mariner	8,232	Radiance		Serenade	70,367	Carnival
500-350	Seven Seas Navigator	50,000	Radiance		Serenade	70,367	Carnival
	Silver Wind	16,927	Silversea		Serenade	70,367	Carnival
	Crystal Symphony	50,302	Crystal		Serenade	70,367	Carnival
	Silver Cloud	16,800	Silversea		Serenade	70,367	Carnival
500-300	Prima	28,000	Rhapsody		Serenade	70,367	Carnival
	Seven Seas Mariner	8,232	Radiance		Serenade	70,367	Carnival
	Seven Seas Mariner	8,232	Radiance		Serenade	70,367	Carnival
	Seven Seas Mariner	8,232	Radiance		Serenade	70,367	Carnival
500-250	Prima	28,000	Rhapsody		Serenade	70,367	Carnival
	Seven Seas Mariner	8,232	Radiance		Serenade	70,367	Carnival
	Seven Seas Mariner	8,232	Radiance		Serenade	70,367	Carnival
	Seven Seas Mariner	8,232	Radiance		Serenade	70,367	Carnival
500-200	Prima	28,000	Rhapsody		Serenade	70,367	Carnival
	Seven Seas Mariner	8,232	Radiance		Serenade	70,367	Carnival
	Seven Seas Mariner	8,232	Radiance		Serenade	70,367	Carnival
	Seven Seas Mariner	8,232	Radiance		Serenade	70,367	Carnival
500-150	Prima	28,000	Rhapsody		Serenade	70,367	Carnival
	Seven Seas Mariner	8,232	Radiance		Serenade	70,367	Carnival
	Seven Seas Mariner	8,232	Radiance		Serenade	70,367	Carnival
	Seven Seas Mariner	8,232	Radiance		Serenade	70,367	Carnival
500-125	Prima	28,000	Rhapsody		Serenade	70,367	Carnival
	Seven Seas Mariner	8,232	Radiance		Serenade	70,367	Carnival
	Seven Seas Mariner	8,232	Radiance		Serenade	70,367	Carnival
	Seven Seas Mariner	8,232	Radiance		Serenade	70,367	Carnival
500-100	Prima	28,000	Rhapsody		Serenade	70,367	Carnival
	Seven Seas Mariner	8,232	Radiance		Serenade	70,367	Carnival
	Seven Seas Mariner	8,232	Radiance		Serenade	70,367	Carnival
	Seven Seas Mariner	8,232	Radiance		Serenade	70,367	Carnival
500-75	Prima	28,000	Rhapsody		Serenade	70,367	Carnival
	Seven Seas Mariner	8,232	Radiance		Serenade	70,367	Carnival
	Seven Seas Mariner	8,232	Radiance		Serenade	70,367	Carnival
	Seven Seas Mariner	8,232	Radiance		Serenade	70,367	Carnival
500-50	Prima	28,000	Rhapsody		Serenade	70,367	Carnival
	Seven Seas Mariner	8,232	Radiance		Serenade	70,367	Carnival
	Seven Seas Mariner	8,232	Radiance		Serenade	70,367	Carnival
	Seven Seas Mariner	8,232	Radiance		Serenade	70,367	Carnival
500-25	Prima	28,000	Rhapsody		Serenade	70,367	Carnival
	Seven Seas Mariner	8,232	Radiance		Serenade	70,367	Carnival
	Seven Seas Mariner	8,232	Radiance		Serenade	70,367	Carnival
	Seven Seas Mariner	8,232	Radiance</				

TRAVEL

City break El Greco, Zurbarán and the fish market

Adam Hopkins finds out why Cadiz is so different from the rest of Spain

Out on its famous swan's neck promontory, protected from the land but not the sea, Cadiz is patently a daughter of the ocean. Cleansed by Atlantic spray, refreshed by Atlantic airs, it knows it is different from the rest of Spain; and especially from Andalucía, to which, in the ordinary manner of speaking, it belongs.

Where Andalucian rivals put on a chest-puffing bravura - Seville with its baroque and oranges, Granada with the Alhambra, all of them with carications in their teeth and a sense of gypsy hair-dos - Cadiz is serious and intent, 18th and 19th century houses going up and up on either side of straight and narrow streets, the houses themselves as straight as seams on perfectly arranged stockings.

It is slightly dark inside these streets and sometimes marginally claustrophobic, making the old part of town, right out on the promontory, a cool and secret place in summer. In winter it can be a bit of a wind-funnel.

The modern town, still to the north, is less extreme in these respects. But an unmistakable sense of straightforwardness underlines the older quarter's fame - for liberalism and humanism, for open-minded rationality, not always leading Andalucian virtues.

Wasn't it, after all, a centre for international commerce, stuffed full of foreigners with interesting and up-to-date ideas, back at the start of the 18th century? As

Seville lost its monopoly on trade with Latin America the palm passed to Cadiz. It started to develop exactly as Seville gave up.

And wasn't Cadiz Spain's leading city for newspaper publishing? Wasn't the great liberal constitution of 1812, which became the touchstone for the modernising aspirations of the nation, written right here, in the lovely elliptical oratory of San Felipe Neri, with Cadiz at liberty while the rest of Spain was laden with Napoleonic chains?

Well, yes, no one could really doubt that version, although it is a little harder to demonstrate that the tradition persists.

But high above the city in his book-lined, picture-stuffed apartment, my new friend Javier Navasques, former city architect, attempts to make the case by comparisons with lesser spots, and allegedly lesser people, elsewhere in Andalucía.

He once had a design job on a big ranch, he says, a real, swell, upper-class Andalucian finca, where the bedroom was so magnificent he hardly dared sleep in it. But more than that, his pyjamas, laid out nightly on the bed, were so beautifully ironed he didn't know whether or not to put them on. You wouldn't catch that happening in Cadiz, he says.

Then, rather naughtily, Javier goes on to tell of the private cinema on another finca where the owners were divided from their employees by a glass partition in case the odour of the latter gave offence to the former. That was a generation ago, maybe it no longer exists. But you certainly

wouldn't find that in Cadiz, either.

Refreshed with a sense of local superiority, we barrel out into the streets for a glass of manzana-nilla, the supposedly salt-tasting sherry of nearby Sanlúcar de Barrameda. On the way, we pass through a tiny baroque quarter, predating the city of rationalism by a century.

"You have to put the baroque down to the Conde," says Javier. "The British raid of 1596 destroyed everything older in the city." He sounds quite pleased that the man he calls el Conde, which is to say England's very own Earl of Essex, had cleared the way for a nice bit of 17th century architecture.

In early evening darkness, this being January, we popped into baroque courtyards in moulderings mansions, now in multi-occupation. In one of them we counted 22 electricity meters, for 22 families, with plants in pots on every flat surface, the soft scent of washing everywhere and delicate vaulting over the ascending stairways. This is the home of some of the finest flamenco

music coming out of modern Andalucía.

In the adjoining (baroque) monastery of Santo Domingo monks were once prepared for missionary work in Latin America. "They might have done more good in Andalucía," says Javier caustically.

There is evidence to prove the city was founded by the Phoenicians

ship used as a training vessel by the Spanish navy. "But the climate change is really terrible for her polychrome painting," says the young friar in charge, appearing at Javier's elbow.

In the end, we have our drink, raising our glasses to El Conde de Espejo, somehow skipping Drake, who burned the old cathedral and the first version of the invincible Armada back in 1587.

Next day, at Javier's insistence, I visit the Women's Hospital, now the bishop's office, to view its brilliant baroque staircase, not huge but dividing and dividing into endless double sets of steps, all under super-fancy stucco ceilings. The hospital chapel houses El Greco's "Vision of St Francis", one of the finest works he ever managed. Surprises are there for the taking in Cadiz.

But mostly I spend my time in the Cadiz that I know best and, in the end, enjoy the most, because it is so different from the rest of Spain - the 18th/19th century town and parts immediately abutting. I wander and wander, having endless small adventures.

One morning, the cleaner lets

me into the Oratory of San Felipe Neri. The effusive ornamentation of the chapel, where journalists sat for the debate on the constitution, illustrates the kind of thing the enlightened constitution-writers were struggling so hard against.

I spend a long morning at the Fine Arts Museum. It houses the magnificent set of paintings by Zurbarán for the Charterhouse of Jerez de la Frontera, including a rendering of St Hugh of Lincoln;

it also houses the thrilling and often lovely archaeological evidence which proves the city was founded by the Phoenicians, as tradition has always maintained, and just possibly the oldest city of western Europe. It became a pretty nifty Roman city, too.

Their theatre, beside the Old Cathedral, is currently under excavation.

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it also houses the thrilling and often lovely archaeological evidence which proves the city was founded by the Phoenicians, as tradition has always maintained, and just possibly the oldest city of western Europe. It became a pretty nifty Roman city, too.

Their theatre, beside the Old Cathedral, is currently under excavation.

But mostly I spend my time in the Cadiz that I know best and, in the end, enjoy the most, because it is so different from the rest of Spain - the 18th/19th century town and parts immediately abutting. I wander and wander, having endless small adventures.

One morning, the cleaner lets

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PROPERTY / OUTDOORS

Gardening

Modern lessons of history

On reflection, Robin Lane Fox finds that landscapers in Georgian England often got it right

My garden is entering its teenage years and after wrestling long with the soil and weather, I think I have confirmed most of the prejudices with which I began. I now find that several of them are not so unusual. I have been reading some of the engaging writings on landscape in the history of Georgian England. At their most articulate they often seem to be saying the same thing. My advice to unsure gardeners and garden improvers is to read them, adapt the bits which make sense and underpin your personal taste.

I enjoyed the letter on gardening which the Professor of Poetry in Oxford sent to his friend, the Reverend Wheeler, in 1751. Like the present Professor of Poetry, James Fenton, the then incumbent, Joseph Spence, was a keen landscape gardener. In 1751, he had reached my age and maturity seems to have inclined him to many of the same views.

Spence disliked fancy decoration, objects "like those ridiculous things called Chinese rails which are gone now as much in fashion in town as well as in the country". I entirely agree. I dislike most of the pretentious cages of wrought iron or frilly little folies which find their way into gardens as supports for climbers.

Spence also attached the highest importance to the mixing of light and shade and emphasised that light should prevail in the foreground "to give a joyous air". He connected this with the extreme importance of "variety in all things".

Variety did not mean bits of coloured gravel and an array of garden animals in imitation stone. It meant the varying of trees of different green, the mixing of land and water, the opposition of a grove and open ground and the varying of the different sorts of tree in each "grovette".

I like this forgotten name "grovette". Spence is a great source for the practices of landscape gardeners earlier in his century; he tells us how the famous William Kent used to insist that never more than three or four varieties of the same tree should be planted together in small clumps. He would also stake out a "grovette" before planting in order to see that no

more than two of the stakes stood in line when viewed from any one angle. Modern fashion is to be much more regular and uniform with our copies. Greater eyes than ours saw it differently and on thinking about it, I feel that they were often right.

The boundaries of gardens are always extremely important. Spence owned 16 acres near Byleet in Surrey. "God help us," he wrote, "we live in the neighbourhood of one of the most dreary, sandy heaths in Europe." From my hillside of Cotswoold shingle, I sympathise as I look through ageing canopies of Leylandii conifers.

Spence urged his readers to conceal the boundaries of the garden wherever possible, not just by planting them with hedges but by sinking the fences in ditches or hedges whenever possible. This taste is expensive and almost impossible in today's suburban countryside, but I do agree that we should try "to con-

trive the out-parts in order to unite well with the country round them". Every garden comes with a setting and surround and even if you want to block out the neighbour's beastly new house as soon as possible,

ground which was all flat. Naturally, they did not have to mow it with a mini-tractor. I am less devoted to surprises than they are; I prefer the opinion of a character in a novel by Thomas Peacock in 1816. Something may be surprising on the first visit but "pray, Sir, by what name do you distinguish it when a person walks round the grounds for the second time?". The main viewer of the garden is the owner and owners simply cannot go on pretending to surprise themselves.

I also differ from Spence and his age in my preference for straight lines. They were reacting against the formal Dutch style and French avenues which continued into the 1720s and they were also thinking of the best shapes for woods and groups of park trees. Spence states that he has a "mortal aversion" to all angles and would much prefer walks to curve and be "serpentised" and the corners of all woods to be rounded off.

Nowadays, we are more bothered with the shape of flower beds than forests

you need to do it with hedging which suits the surrounding vegetation and sits properly in the view from the garden itself.

Spence and his friends were particularly concerned with surprise and variety. If was even felt that "very small swellings" would help if properly placed on.

Nowadays, we are more bothered with the shape of flower beds than forests

Some of my own principles plainly did not bother the Georgian park-owner. I have learnt to be very careful about the season at which particular trees come into leaf. I would never choose a late-leaving mulberry, robinia or walnut as the main tree beside my house. This year, walnuts were struggling to recover from spring frost and establish proper leaves before June. I would also pay special heed to our grandfathers' opinion that the surrounding approach or courtyard to a house should be well set with two centuries of effort.

evergreens and early-flowering shrubs. Again, the question of furnishing a house's immediate surrounds did not concern our 18th century forebears.

What interested the Georgians by the 1750s was the imitating of "beautiful nature". Nowadays, it is harder to think that nature is always so beautiful unless you view her through the idealised perspective of landscape painting. Where we can agree is that gardens should not be "too like works of art". Of course it is rather ridiculous to lay down a rule for all gardens everywhere, but I do sense a kindred spirit here across 200 years. It is not that formality or straightness are wrong to my eye, but my own particular ambition is that of a hard-pressed weekend gardener with too much ground to control.

My aim is that at each point in the season, it should look as though I had just died three weeks before. It takes skill and constant adjustment to learn how to seem to be dead when you are not. The results do wonders for the artlessness of a garden's appearance. They also do something for the constant sense of failing short of a workload which needs to be done. Pretend to be dead and conform to the basic principle in the way that sharp eyes have viewed gardens in the past two centuries of effort.

Fishing

Cursing as I look out of the window

Tom Fort feels at the mercy of Britain's implacable climate

Once Mr Blair has sorted out the House of Lords, I wonder if he might focus his energies on a matter of even greater importance to the people of Britain. I refer, of course, to the weather.

The more I study it, the more intolerable it seems to me that a modern dynamic society should be at the mercy of climatic conditions which are a law unto themselves, immune to any sense of what is useful and proper.

This autumn has enabled me to put my finger on the crux of the problem. Broadly speaking, there have been two species of weather: deluge accompanied by gales; and numbing cold. We have lurched from one to the other and back again, with scarcely anything in between. The effect for a busy man such as me is that it has been almost impossible to arrange a day's fishing. This is unacceptable.

I had planned such a day not long ago. I was to go after pike. My tackle was made ready, the smelly sprats to lure the fish were procured, all competing demands on my time had been fobbed off with various falsehoods and half-truths. And what did I find when I stepped outside? That the frost and anaemic sunshine promised by the forecasters had been joined by a leaf-rattling wind from the direction of Siberia, about which they had been sinfully silent.

My resolve failed at once. I saw myself with frozen fingers, ears a-tingle, feet like chunks of parmesan frost, without hope of catching anything. I knew as soon as I put my head outside the door that no pike would feed in my vicinity that day.

The previous week I had actually succeeded in going fishing. The reason was that, by the time I had realised that the wet sound outside was that of persistent rain, I had already made the sandwiches, checked my waders for leaks (incompletely, as it turned out), sorted through my flies, and built up a powerful urge to have a skirmish with that lovely and amenable autumn fish, the grayling.

My friend who was to take me to his water reminded me of my oft-repeated dictum, that grayling fishing should take place on soft, gentle days with the promise of an hour or two of sunshine around midday. He pointed out that this day did not correspond in any way to these principles. I told him that such days belonged to theory, that what he maintained was rain was in fact drizzle, and that he should cease bleating and start driving.

Actually, it did stop raining. Nor was there a puff of wind. For these small mercies we were duly grateful. But it would be idle to pretend that the Wiltshire

countryside was at its best. It looked, and felt, as if a great, sodden, dirty handkerchief had been lain over it.

The Avon ran full and slightly coloured, but fishable. And fish we did, and fish we caught; for it is one of the numerous merits of the grayling that it will feed in almost any circumstances. There was even a smattering of fly on the surface, and a tiny dry fly brought both of us some moderate, but cheering, sport with not very big fish.

My friend was also chased down his bank by a dog as big as a donkey, which gave me a good laugh.

Later we encountered the keeper, who told us we were in the wrong place for the better grayling.

By then, though, whatever half-light this dreariest, dankest of days had been able to boast was already leaking away. We decided it was time to forsake this dripping muck for home. It had been better than not going fishing, but not by the sort of margin to convince a fellow that the invention of November had been a good idea.

And that has been the sum of my autumn fishing.

My resolve failed. I saw myself with frozen fingers, ears a-tinkle ...

No tussle with barbel, no trotting a worm for chub or perch, no heart-stopping lunge of Pike in pursuit of a well-aimed sprat; nothing beyond looking out of the window, and cursing. My one consolation has been reading the best new fishing book in ages, Chris Yates' *Falling In Again* (Merlin Unwin £17.99), which is terrific.

It simply will not do. The country's several million anglers are entitled to something better. We need a national strategy - are you listening at Number 10? - to deliver to those of us whose happiness or prosperity is materially affected by the weather a reasonable ration of decent days.

As a first step, to show that the matter is being seriously addressed, I would suggest the establishment of a National Weather Authority, with a remit to examine all possible courses of action and produce a programme of effective measures. Yes, I accept that it will cost money to implement; and, no, I haven't the faintest idea what those measures might be.

But the government which, at long last, succeeds in making the weather our servant rather than our capricious master will earn the gratitude of us all; and will probably remain in power for the next 100 years.



Lamper Head: a combination of 14th century and modern design high on a hill above the Dart valley

On the Move

Built to withstand a Devon earthquake

Gerald Cadogan on a wooden house near the sea

An extraordinary-looking house in Devon has the appearance of a property that has been there for centuries. But in spite of its medieval looks, it is only eight years old and combines the best of old and new building.

Lamper Head near Cornwall beside the river Dart uses an oak cruck-frame construction in the main part of the building and Douglas fir in the wing.

This unusual property sits high on a hill above the Dart valley and has fabulous views.

The present owner planned the house with Rod James, architect with Chippenham-based Carpenter Oak & Woodland, which is an expert in old roofs. The firm rebuilt the roof of the great kitchen at Windsor Castle after the fire, and has recently restored the hammer beam medieval roof at Stirling Castle.

For Lamper Head it used oaks from Gloucestershire that had blown down in the great storm of 1987. The result is a sympathetic timber house, with plenty of light and good acoustics and a resilient frame in case of earthquakes, built to combine 14th century and modern design - the drainage system is an important post-medieval feature, for example.

The 47ft-long drawing room is particularly sensational, with three huge oak

'Uninhabitable'

For a less strenuous life beside water, consider a canal - if you do not mind the passing traffic. At Ivinghoe on the Grand Union Canal in Buckinghamshire, the 1821 Seabrook Lock Cottage - a small Georgian box-house - is for sale for £270,000 from Cesare Nash in Tring (01442 827000).

On the edge of Newbury, on the Kennet and Avon Canal, The Boatshouse at West Mills is a dilapidated Victorian building. Even the agent, Burrough in Newbury (01635 521505), which is asking for offers about £150,000, agrees that it is "uninhabitable at present".

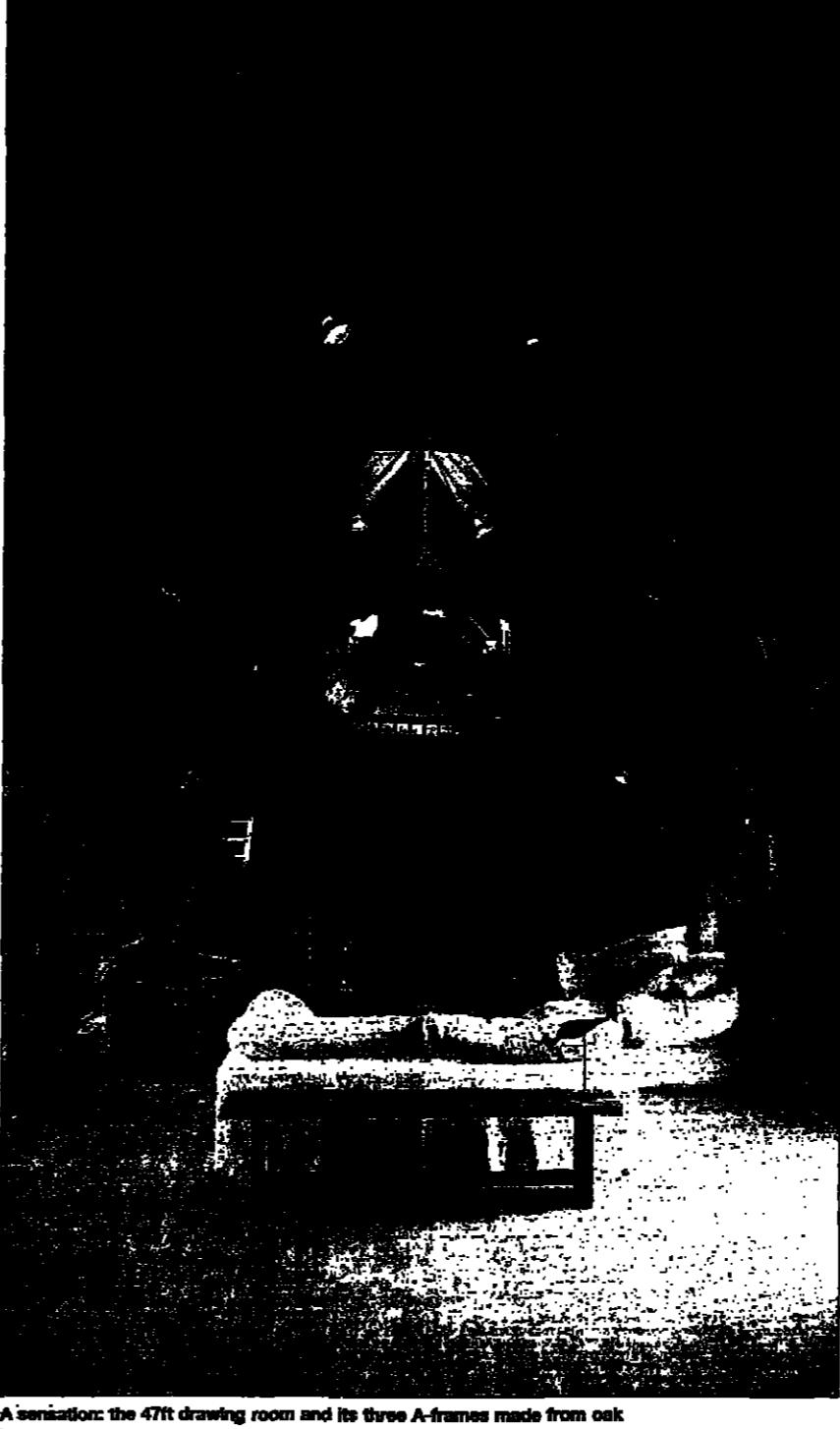
Boats were once made in the outbuildings and the property, which comes with five acres of water meadow which are available separately, has also been a butchery and a market garden. Access to it is over a swing bridge.

Urban palace

At the other end of the price scale, 19 Wilton Crescent and 15 Wilton Row, London SW1, form an urban palace in Belgravia costing £25.5m from Aylesford (0171-351 2383) for a lease which has 57 years to run. The ground rent, buyers will be relieved to hear, is just £160 a year.

Looking up

In Cornwall, Tycares (Cornish for "the house on the cliff") overlooks the fishing village of Polperro and the cliffs. It is definitely not a place for the "unit", as the only access is by a steep path. Its 47ft-long drawing room is particularly sensational, with three huge oak



A sensation: the 47ft drawing room and its three A-frames made from oak

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BOWDON, Almon Place, Gandy Road, 5 bedroom town houses. Priced from £320,000. Contact: George Holmes. Tel: 0161 929 9118.

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PROPERTY

Come and build a town right in my backyard

Anne Spackman looks at a test case which will have an impact on where millions of homes are built

Peter Dawe is the exception who proves the rule of nimbysim. Faced with the endemic south-of-England problem of where to site tens of thousands of new homes, he is suggesting they all go right in his back yard.

He has nothing to gain financially from the idea. It simply seems to him the rational answer to the question of how to cope with the ever-expanding population of Cambridge.

Cambridgeshire is expected to see the largest relative increase in population of any English county over the next 20 or so years. By 2021 its numbers are predicted to rise by a quarter. Ironically, Alan Holmans, the statistician who came up with 4.4m as the number of households likely to be created in England and Wales between 1991 and 2016 has, himself, recently moved from London to Cambridge.

This week these figures and all the other issues related to the county's growth were getting a very public hearing. Cambridgeshire is one of the three East Anglian counties taking part in the first test of the government's new policy of shifting planning to the regions. Whatever the government decides here will have significant repercussions for the housing debate in the rest of southern England.

On Tuesday, the first Examination in Public of regional plan-

ning strategy began. Peter Dawe is one of dozens of participants submitting alternative strategies during a very concentrated two-week hearing.

As far as Dawe is concerned, the city of Cambridge, which is the prime catalyst for all this growth, is full.

Dawe has lived in the city for 20 years and watched his quality of life decline. The doctors' surgery is always full. Some shops in the city centre have introduced queuing systems. He felt obliged to take his son out of his school when the class size reached 36.

He also knows the city as an employer. Dawe is one of Cambridge's high-tech millionaires. His computer networking company had more than 400 employees when he sold it three years ago for £150m. Virtually all his recruits were commuting at least 15 miles to work because of the difficulty of finding a home in or around Cambridge.

"The city's problem is that it has too many jobs – though they are not allowed to say that," he says. "There are about 80,000 jobs in the city and the science park and a working population of about 40,000. The other half are commuting in. If we don't allow for growth those jobs will go abroad. They won't go to Huntington or St Ives, they will go to Helsinki or Singapore."

His solution to Cambridge's problem is to pull down, centred on the old airfield which he

overlooks from his home in Oakington. As a site it has several virtues: it lies north of Cambridge, counter-balancing the pull of the science park to the south; roughly half the area is brown land and the rest is what some have described as "agri-art"; it has a disused railway line linking it to Cambridge.

Lying just five miles from the city, on the edge of Cambridge's green belt, Dawe believes, crucially, that it is near enough to attract the many employers looking to expand or move into the area. But critics disagree.

Stephen Sillery, head of estate agent Bidwells' planning department, believes the employers will not move. "Planning policy has been successful in moving houses, but not in moving jobs," he says. "Cambridge is the jewel in the crown for high-tech firms. There has been limited success in moving them elsewhere."

The key local authorities are



Peter Dawe on the disused rail link to Cambridge; he says he'll move to Norwich if no new town is built

Dave Ahmed

interested in Peter Dawe's idea. They are considering a new town as one of four potential solutions to Cambridge's problems: the others are expanding market towns, building along transport corridors and, most controversially, building on the city's green belt.

The council also believes that the nearer people are to their jobs, the less likely they are to travel by car.

The Council for the Protection of Rural England, not surprisingly, sees things differently. Its favoured solution to Cambridge's problems is to build a town on a larger, disused airfield at Alconbury, 15 miles from Cambridge. "The 1,000-acre site is big enough to meet all the county's housing need," says Christopher Bird, who runs the CPRE branch in Cambridge.

Meanwhile, the housebuilders are busily fighting over every piece of land which becomes available for development. Bidwells reports that any site close

to or in Cambridge attracts offers from every leading national house-builder and a number of local competitors. Land prices in the city have broken the £1m-an-acre barrier and are at £800,000 in the popular villages.

High land prices are helping fuel Cambridge's already expensive housing costs. A recent county council study of Land Registry data showed that certain kinds of property in Cambridge cost almost double the East Anglian average. The average for a detached house in Cambridge was £184,000 compared with £66,000 in Fenland and a regional average of £59,000.

Cambridge University and the city's main hospital report difficulties in recruiting lower-paid staff because people cannot afford to move to the city.

Alison Quant, who sits in the county council's planning hot seat, points out that rising prices in Cambridge city are not neces-

sarily a reason for releasing land elsewhere in the county, because demand is so localised.

The county council already has 35,500 new homes in the planning pipeline. It calculates that by 2016 45,000 more will be needed, 21,000 fewer than the government forecasts. Peter Dawe's proposed new town, with a projected population of 40,000–50,000 would up the county-wide demand.

The examining panel, which started sitting at the beginning of February, will have two months to make its report to John Prescott, the deputy prime minister, who will subsequently produce the government's regional planning guidance.

For Peter Dawe, the result will have a more immediate impact. If there is a decision not to build a town he plans to leave the area.

"If I don't win the argument, I will move to somewhere like Norwich," he says. "It's a question of quality of life."

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CHICHESTER CHAMPS

INTERNATIONAL ARTS GUIDE

What's on around the world

■ AMSTERDAM

EXHIBITIONS

Rijksmuseum
Tel: 31-20-673 2121

● Adriaen de Vries (1566-1626): Imperial Sculptor. Major exhibition celebrating the work of the Dutch sculptor, who worked for Emperor Rudolf II among other European courts. Around 40 bronzes will be on display, borrowed from public and private collections in Europe and the US; to Mar 14.

● Asser: Pioneer of Dutch photography. Nearly 200 photographs, including portraits and still lifes, made by Eduard Isaac Asser (1808-1894). The prints were produced by a variety of techniques with which Asser experimented before devoting his full attention to developing a method of photographic reproduction; to Mar 14.

● Van Gogh in the Rijksmuseum: during the period of the Van Gogh Museum's closure for renovation and building work, a selection of its finest holdings are on show in the Rijksmuseum's South Wing; to Mar 7.

OPERA

Netherlands Opera, Het Muziektheater

Tel: 31-20-551 8911

Carmen: by Bizet. New staging by Andreas Homoki, conducted by Edo de Waart. The designs are by Wolfgang Gessmann and Gabriele Jaencke, and the cast includes Carmen Oprișanu and Martin Thompson; Feb 6, 9, 12.

■ BARCELONA

EXHIBITIONS

Fundació Joan Miró

Tel: 34-93-329 1908

www.bcn.miró.es

Miràtge: celebrating the centenary of the artist's birth. Includes over 80 paintings and 50 photographs; to Feb 7.

Museu Picasso

Tel: 34-3-319 6310

Picasso - Engravings 1900-1942: temporary exhibition of more than 250 works on loan from the Musée Picasso in Paris; to Apr 4.

■ BERLIN

CONCERT

Konzerthaus

Tel: 49-30-203090

Berlin Symphony Orchestra: conducted by Elihu Inbal in works by Liszt. With mezzo soprano Doris Sofiel and pianists Donald Sulzen and Enrico Pace; Feb 6.

OPERA

Deutsche Oper

Tel: 49-30-34384-01

Faust by Gounod. Conducted by Sebastian Lang-Lessing in a staging by John Dew; Feb 12.

■ BONN

EXHIBITION

Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland

Tel: 49-228-917 1200

www.kah-bonn.de

High Renaissance in the Vatican: Art and Culture at the Papal Court (1503-34). The early 16th century saw Rome establish itself as the centre of art in Europe. The Vatican commissioned work from such great artists as Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo and Raphael. This exhibition displays some of the masterpieces that resulted, as well as detailing the contexts in which they were produced; to Apr 11.

■ BRUSSELS

CONCERT

Palais des Beaux Arts

San Francisco Symphony Orchestra: conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas in works by Ives, Canteloube and Prokofiev, with soprano Christine Brewer; Feb 7.

OPERA

La Monnaie

Tel: 32-2-229 1211

Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk: conducted by Antonio Pappano in a new staging by Stein Winge, with sets by Benoit Dugendyn and costumes by Jorge Jara; Feb 7, 10, 12.

■ DALLAS

OPERA

Dallas Opera

Tel: 7-214-443 1000

La Bohème: by Puccini. Conducted by Antonello Almiani in a staging by Mark Lamos, with sets by Michael Yeargan; Feb 6.

■ FORT WORTH

EXHIBITIONS

Kimbell Art Museum

Tel: 817-322-8451

www.kimbellart.org

Matisse and Picasso: A Gentle Rivalry. More than 100 paintings, sculptures and drawings on loan from collections around the world make up this first-ever exhibition devoted to the relationship between the two great modernists; to May 2.

■ FRANKFURT

CONCERT

Alte Oper

Tel: 49-69-134 0400

San Francisco Symphony Orchestra: conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas in works by Barber and Mahler, with violin soloist Gil Shaham; Feb 6.

■ GLASGOW

OPERA

Theatre Royal



Joan Rodgers and Stéphane Doutey in Scottish Opera's new staging of 'Der Rosenkavalier', opening tonight at Glasgow's Theatre Royal

Tel: 44-141-332 8000

Scottish Opera: Der Rosenkavalier, by R. Strauss. New staging by David McVicar, conducted by Richard Armstrong. The cast includes Joan Rodgers; Feb 6.

■ HARTFORD

EXHIBITION

Wadsworth Atheneum

Pietro de Hooch (1629-1681): previously seen at Dulwich Picture Gallery, this first-ever one-man show of the Dutch painter offers a reassessment of his work. Less celebrated than his contemporary, Vermeer, de Hooch was a pioneer in his own right, and a specialist in maternal and domestic subjects; to Feb 27.

■ HOUSTON

EXHIBITION

Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

Tel: 1-713-539 7750

Brassai: The Eye of Paris. A retrospective of Brassai's work that coincides with the 100th anniversary of his birth. Dubbed 'the eye of Paris' by Henry Miller, Brassai celebrated that city in photographic series like 'Dance', 'Society' and 'Graffiti'. This exhibition includes the 'Paris at Night' series: photographs taken during nocturnal wanderings with the flâneur and poet Léon Paul Fargue; to Feb 28.

THEATRE

Houston Grand Opera, Wortham Center

Tel: 1-713-227 2787

A Little Night Music: by Sondheim. Grant Gershon conducts a production by Michael Leibert, with a cast including Frederica von Stade, Thomas Allen and Sheri Greenawald; Feb 6, 9, 12.

■ LAUSANNE

EXHIBITION

Musée Cantonal des Beaux-Arts

Tel: 41-21-312 8332

Courbet - artist and promoter: more than 70 paintings by Gustave Courbet (1819-77), including landscapes, portraits and nudes. The exhibition concentrates upon Courbet's artistic output after 1855, especially that produced during his exile in Switzerland; to Feb 21.

■ LEEDS

THEATRE

West Yorkshire Playhouse

Tel: 44-113-213 7700

The Merchant of Venice: by Shakespeare. Jude Kelly directs a cast including Ian McKellen as Prospero, with designs by Robert Innes Hopkins; opens on Thursday

■ LILLE

EXHIBITION

Palais des Beaux Arts

Goya: un regard libre. Small-scale exhibition which explores the range and peculiarities of the painter's work. The 50 works on display include loans from around the world; to Mar 14.

■ LONDON

CONCERTS

Barbican Hall

Tel: 44-171-638 8891

● London Symphony Orchestra: conducted by Colin Davis in works by Beethoven and Elgar, with piano soloist Richard Goode; Feb 7.

● Vienna Symphony Orchestra: conducted by Vladimir Fedoseyev in works by J. Strauss, Mozart and Beethoven, with piano soloist Artur Pizarro; Feb 11.

EXHIBITIONS

Barbican Art Gallery

Tel: 44-171-638 8897

● Africa by Africa: A Photographic Survey. Spanning the breadth of photography produced in Africa since the 1920s. Includes works by Mama Casset, Saydou Keita and Samuel Fosso; to Mar 28.

● Picasso and Photography: The Dark Mirror. Exhibition exploring the influence of photography, and including photographic works by Picasso; to Mar 28.

British Museum

Tel: 44-171-636 1555

The Golden Sword: Stamford Raffles and the East. Display bringing together biographical material with objects collected by the self-taught scholar who is chiefly remembered as the founder of Singapore. Includes musical instruments, masks, shadow puppets, and plant and animal drawings; to Apr 18.

■ LOS ANGELES

EXHIBITIONS

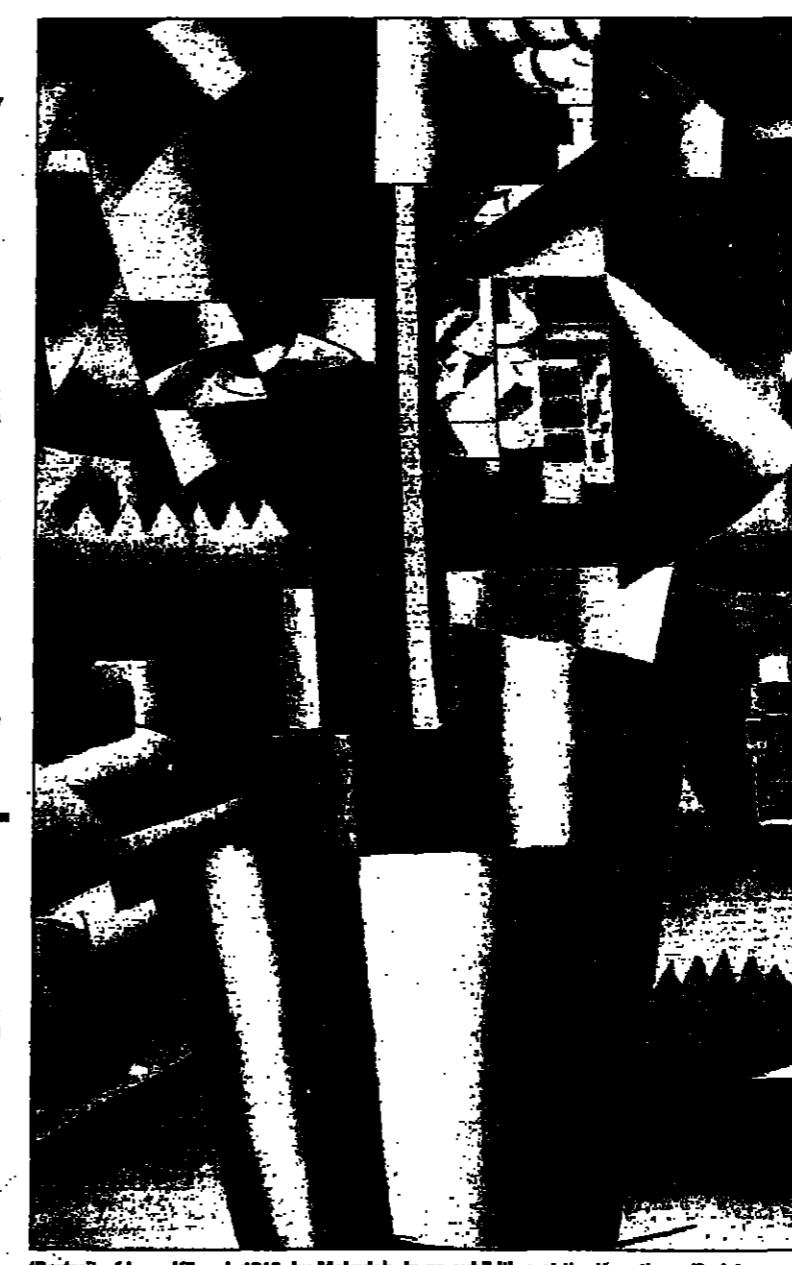
Los Angeles County Museum of Art

Tel: 412-857 6000

● Ancient West Mexico, Art of the Unknown Region: comprehensive overview of West Mexican art between 200 BC and 800; to Mar 29.

● June Wayne: A Retrospective. Survey of the artist's printmaking work from 1946 to 1995; to Feb 15.

● Van Gogh's Van Gogh: Masterpieces from the Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam. Display of 70 paintings on loan during the period of the Dutch Museum's renovation, transferring to LA from Washington.



'Portrait of Ivan Klimt', 1913, by Malevich, in an exhibition at the Kunsthalle Zurich

● The Night: exploring the development of the nocturne, or night scene, in western art from the 15th to the 20th century. Includes early examples by artists including Cranach, baroque works by Caravaggio and his followers, and works by the German romantics; to Feb 7.

director is Max Stafford-Clark

■ PARIS

CONCERTS

Salle Pleyel

Tel: 33-1-4561 6569
Orchestre de Paris: conducted by Frans Brüggen in works by Bach, Mozart and Mendelssohn; Feb 10, 11.

EXHIBITIONS

Grand Palais

Tel: 33-1-4413 1730
Un ami de Cézanne et de Van Gogh: le docteur Gachet (1828-1909). Exhibition devoted to the doctor and painter who was a friend to Cézanne, Pisarro, Monet and Renoir as well as to Van Gogh, who famously spent the last weeks of his life with Gachet at Auvers-sur-Oise; to Apr 26, then transferring to New York.

Musée du Louvre

Tel: 33-1-4020 5151
www.louvre.fr
Eternal monuments of Ramses II: New Theban excavations. Display of the latest archaeological findings from the Egyptian pharaoh's tomb; from Feb 10 to May 10.

OPERA

Théâtre des Champs Élysées

Tel: 33-1-4952 5050
Opéra National de Lyon: Zelmira, by Rossini. Conducted by Maurizio Benini in a staging by Yannis Kokkos. The title role is sung by Mariella Devia; Feb 10, 12.

■ ROMA

EXHIBITIONS

Palazzo delle Esposizioni

Tel: 39-6-474 5903
Palissi: Early Years in Rome. Display of 41 works produced between 1624 and 1628. The centrepiece is 'The sacking of the temple in Jerusalem by Titus' (1925/6), commissioned by the Barberini family and rediscovered by Denis Mahon, the show's curator. Includes major public and private loans from Europe and the US; to Mar 1.

Palazzo Venezia

Tel: 39-6-841 2312
700 Venetian: Capolavori da Ca' Rezzonico. Display of 18th century Venetian art, lent by the Venetian museum to the Palazzo Venezia, which once housed the city's ambassador to Rome. Includes works by Canaletto, Guardi, Longhi and Carlevarijs, and Tiepolo's fresco cycle made for his villa at Zianigo; to Feb 18.

■ TAMPERE

EXHIBITION

Sara Hildén Art Museum

Tel: 358-214 3134
www.tampere.fi/hilden
Tony Cragg: 33 sculptures and a large number of drawings by the British-born artist, now working in Germany. The works on display are from the period 1988-1998; to May 9.

■ TOKYO

CONCERTS

Suntory Hall

Tel: 81-3-3584 9999
● English Chamber Orchestra: conducted by Norio Ochiai in works by Mozart, with piano soloist Michie Koyama; Feb 11.

● National Symphony Orchestra Washington: conducted by Leonard Slatkin in works by Bernstein, Takemitsu, Copland and Mussorgsky. With clarinet soloist Richard Stoltzman; Feb 8.

● National Symphony Orchestra Washington: conducted by Leonard Slatkin in works by John Adams, Tchaikovsky and Dvorák; Feb 9.

● Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra: conducted by Kazushi Ohno in works by Mozart and Tchaikovsky, with piano soloist Gianluca Cascioli; Feb 7.

Weekend Investor

Wall Street

Not just online but right off the charts

John Authers finds that even bad publicity cannot halt the internet mania

Bad publicity is usually bad for share prices. But the behaviour of online broking stocks this week suggests there are always exceptions. They are not so much online as off the charts.

During the week, it emerged that online brokers' investors were financing their deals by borrowing, creating greater risk for the companies themselves. E*Trade, the third-largest online broker, underwent an ordeal under the heavy eye of the press when its trading system went down briefly on Wednesday and Thursday.

Adding a whiff of political cordite, New York's attorney-general said he was launching an inquiry into the industry in response to complaints about delays and faulty service.

In spite of all this bad publicity, the shares did exactly what they should not have done, and gained. E*Trade started the week with an 18 per cent gain, on the back of a stock split, and has not slipped back.

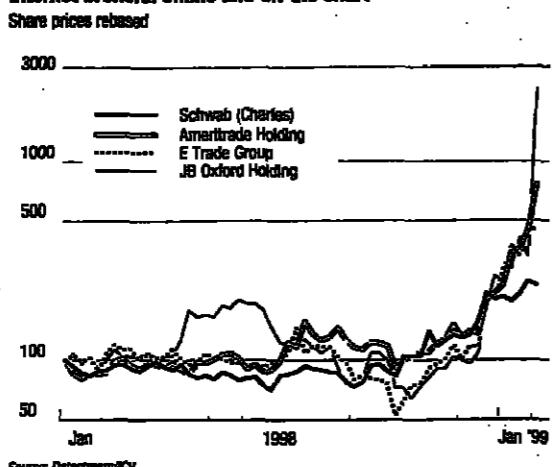
Ameritrade, another of the best established online brokers, rallied from \$30 at the beginning of the week to \$32.50 on Wednesday before slipping back yesterday to about \$31. It started the year (five weeks ago) at \$33.

Small brokers which have barely started to embrace the internet showed the most worrying signs of internet hype. Siebert Financial, a conventional discount broker moving to the web, peaked this week at \$70.40, up rather a lot from \$24 at the beginning of January. J.E. Oxford, a small Californian brokerage whose shares were available for less than 50 cents in the first week of January, touched \$25 before slipping back.

Activity among online brokers was the greatest of several alarming signals this week. There was little relief after the Federal Reserve decided on Wednesday not to raise interest rates. A rise had seemed a real possibility to stem signs of quickening economic activity.

But Thursday saw one of the biggest falls ever in the Nasdaq composite index, which is weighted towards the largest technology names. It slipped 3.3 per cent, losing 83.34 to 2,410.07

Internet brokers: online and off the chart



the third-worst daily decline in its history. Again, the evolution of the market for computers was at the heart of the fluctuations. Shares in companies such as Intel, the largest semiconductor manufacturer, and Sun Microsystems fell more than 5 per cent in response to fears of a price war for computers.

All the evidence is that internet trading is booming, and that it has gained critical mass so far this year. A report from Credit Suisse First Boston showed that trades on the internet increased 34 per cent from the third to the fourth quarter of last year, to average 340,000 a day.

Charles Schwab, still comfortably the largest online broker, reports a sharp increase in trading even since then. These are good reasons to be bullish about the industry. But system black-outs, as suffered by several brokers as well as E*Trade, suggest problems.

Online brokers are also seeing an alarming increase in "margin trading" where investors do not pay the full price of a share when they buy it. If the share price goes down, they get leveraged profits.

Brokers themselves bear some of the risk if the price goes down and the investors are unable to pay the original price in full.

This has forced online dealers to raise their margin requirements. On Monday, Schwab increased the proportion of equity that investors must hold in an account from 50 to 70 per cent for a

range of internet stocks. Waterhouse Securities has already imposed a 100 per cent requirement on the hottest internet stocks.

None of this sounds healthy. And there is one more glaring conceptual problem.

Online trading is a low-margin business - lower than conventional discount broking. It is just as prone to a price war as the mainstream computer market.

Schwab's own share price dipped alarmingly early last year when it became apparent that the firm's change in pricing structure, designed to move more clients to the web, was depressing profits.

For later entrants, building a presence on the web, through low prices and heavy advertising, could be even more costly.

But a year later, dealers appear to believe that the shares of discount brokers making a shift to the web should be bought, not sold. Only a massive increase in the total volume of shares traded on the internet can justify this.

Dealers are betting either on a big drop in market share for the likes of Merrill Lynch and Paine Webber and the other established conventional brokers, or for a huge expansion in the total volume of the market. That still looks like a gamble.

Dow Jones Ind Average

Monday 9,345.70 - 13.13
Tuesday 9,274.12 - 71.58
Wednesday 9,365.81 + 92.89
Thursday 9,304.50 - 62.31

Friday

The big question is: were they being generous or did they know something awful about the economy or financial system?

"They" are the nine members of the Bank of England's monetary policy committee who surprised most people in the markets on Thursday when they cut base rates by a half, rather than a quarter, of a percentage point.

The stock market blipped upwards soon after the announcement but the enthusiasm failed to last.

After all, the reason most economists had predicted a quarter-point cut was that recent economic data had appeared to show the UK might avoid recession after all.

Fourth-quarter gross domestic product growth was stronger than expected and the surveys of business opinion, such as the Confederation of British Industry

(excluding inflation) terms is 2 to 4 per cent. Given the 2.5 per cent inflation target, that implies nominal rates of 4.5 to 6.5 per cent. After Thursday's cut, the UK is right in the middle of the neutral range.

So, the Bank had an excuse for caution, especially as its chosen measure of inflation, the underlying rate (which excludes mortgage interest payments), was actually above the 2.5 per cent target on the last measurement.

Does it mean, therefore, that the Bank is privy to some awful economic information of which the rest of us are unaware? Not necessarily. It could be that has decided merely to move swiftly to a "neutral" level of interest rates appropriate for the economic circumstances.

A neutral level of interest rates, like Goldilocks' porridge, is one that is just right - neither too high, nor too low, so that it speeds up.

It is all a bit of a guess, but the assumption is that the neutral level in real

terms has been a rather better performance from the smaller stocks and midcaps, which have picked up on the improving economic news

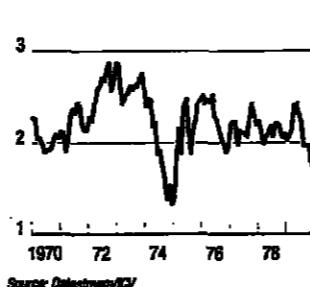
Does this make shares cheap?

GDP-GNP yield ratio

FTSE Government All Stocks redemption yield divided by dividend yield on Datastream UK total market index

5

Source: Datastream/ICV



Philip Coggan looks at the latest rate cut



You'll like this cut - it's more generous than anyone expected

and a frenzy of takeover activity. By Thursday night, the FTSE 250 index had gained 7.8 per cent on the year and the SmallCap 60, but the Footsie had pushed up only 1 per cent.

Such news will be welcome to the long-despairing fans of smaller stocks - except that, many times before, a smallcap rally has started in the first months of the year only to peter out in the summer.

However, lower interest rates are perceived commonly as good news for this area of the market, which has a heavy manufacturing weighting and is more exposed to the UK economy than the multinational blue chips in the Footsie.

But while the Bank's actions may be good news for the market in the short term, does the new anti-inflation regime bode so well in the long term? The answer could be no, if the results of a new study are to be believed.

The team at Barclays Capital has looked at this issue as part of its annual equity-gilt study (now one of two competing products). The study examines the yield ratio, which is one of the most commonly used measures of comparing shares and bonds. For much of recent history, the ratio normally has been around 2. In other words, bonds have yielded twice as much as the dividend yield on shares.

In theory, the higher the relative yield of bonds, the greater their attraction; when the difference narrows, the greater the temptation to switch into shares. The present ratio (see graph) is around 1.5, well below the norm for the past 20 years, so that should make shares wildly attractive.

Not so fast. The 1970s and 1980s were periods when inflation was rampant, eating into the fixed nominal value of bonds and forcing them to offer a high yield to attract buyers. But, in today's more subdued inflationary environment, bonds are less exposed. They are not need to offer such a high return.

If the floor for the ratio is not 2, where is it? The team at Barclays Capital thinks that the crucial element is inflation. Broadly speaking, since 1918 the ratio has fallen into two ranges, depending on whether inflation is low or high - just above 2 or below 1.

Barclays uses a 15-year moving average for inflation as a proxy for investors' expectations. At the moment, that figure is 4.5 per cent. But in the past, when the average has been 2.5 per cent or below, the ratio has always been below 1; in other words, the yield on equities has been greater than that of gilts.

In other words, history suggests that, if the Bank hits the inflation target consistently, shares should have a higher yield than gilts. That should require some considerable outperformance by government bonds from even today's exalted levels. Of course, it could mean that bonds do badly and shares do a lot worse.

philip.coggan@ft.com

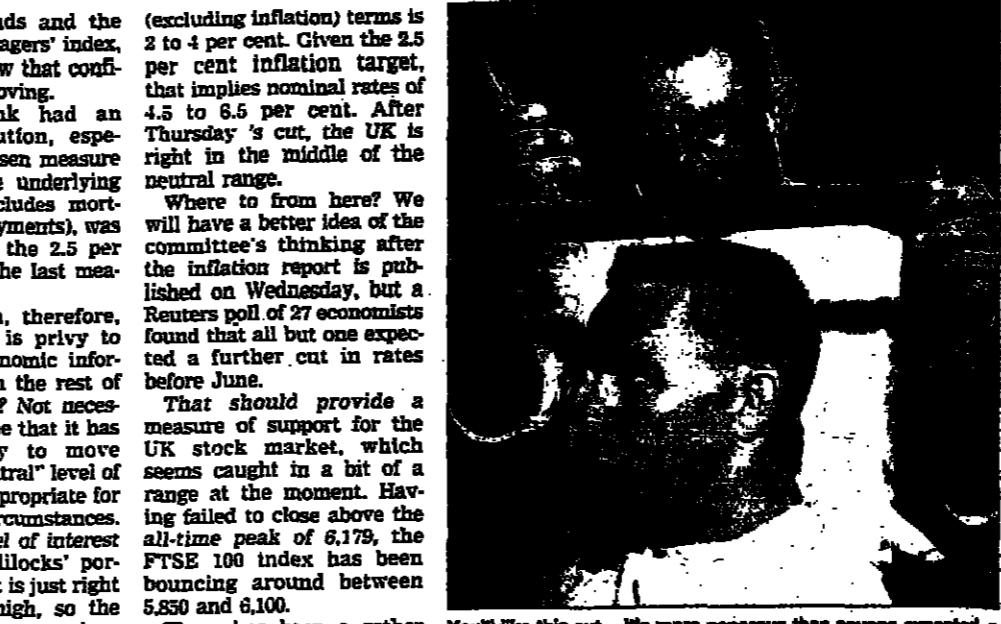
The difference between success and failure is paper thin.

FINANCIAL TIMES
No FT, no comment.

London

Oh, to be a fly on the wall

Philip Coggan looks at the latest rate cut



Barry Riley

America, right or wrong

Will the runaway locomotive come off the rails?

T

he American railroad engine is running at full power, but the old "locomotive" theory of global economic growth can scarcely work if the international carriages have become detached. Anyway, on its own and dangerously unbalanced, will the runaway engine come on the rails?

Many developing countries are desperate for economic growth to raise their living standards. For decades, this seemed to be achievable. In the 1980s, GDP growth averaged 8 per cent a year in south-east Asia compared with 2.8 per cent in the US.

Strategies were worked out for surplus capital to flow from the rich countries to the "emerging markets" where returns would be higher. As much as 20 per cent of British or US pension funds, it was argued by the bulls, should be invested for the long-term in Asia, Latin America and east Europe (although Africa was always beyond the pale). Fortunately, your pension plan never got nearly that enthusiastic.

Late in the 1990s, though, something has gone horribly wrong. US growth has accelerated to 4 per cent, but south-east Asia and east Europe went into recession in 1998 and the Brazilian crisis appears likely to plunge Latin America as a whole into the same mess this year. Nobody knows what is really happening in China, although parts of Asia are now starting to recover.

International investors have been repatriating their money from almost all the emerging

markets. Global economic growth may be no more than 1.6 per cent in 1999, making this the weakest year since the recession of 1982.

The US blames Japan and, increasingly, continental Europe, which has suddenly decelerated, for this mess. It cannot understand why the sleeping coaches are refusing to couple up. Japan is simply imploding; its economy appears to have shrunk by 3 per cent last year, and the latest sharp rise in yen bond yields, with the associated strength of the yen against the dollar, might well trigger a further round of economic contraction later in 1999. Meanwhile, the euro-zone is obsessed with its internal politics. This week, the European Central Bank refused to reduce short-term interest rates even though inflation appears to have hit a brick wall, core euro-zone inflation is less than 1 per cent, and the average unemployment rate in the region is 10.8 per cent and rising.

The Bank of England took a much more urgent line and, on Thursday, docked an unexpectedly large half a percentage point off its repo rate although, at 5½ per cent, this remains high in global terms. The disturbing worldwide trends must have played an important part in the thinking here. We may be pleased at the cut but perhaps we should be alarmed, too. The London stock market celebrated but soon had second thoughts.

To the Americans, the solutions are glaringly obvious. The Japanese must "monetise" their

huge fiscal deficit - jargon for saying they must inflate away the excess of paper claims compared with the real wealth in the economy. The Europeans must inject flexibility (or you might say insecurity) into their labour markets as well as loosening their fiscal and monetary policies.

The trouble is, these other cultures are not easily going to ripen the structures of their societies in order to comply with an alien American vision. The fast-ageing Japanese population is obsessed with security, and scarcely at all with growth. Inflation is a young society's game, but the Japanese finance minister is 79 years old. In continental Europe, where ageing also plays a part, there is a preoccupation with solidarity, or social and political cohesion - of which the euro, for all its contradictions, is a powerful manifestation.

American policy recommendations can easily be seen as self-serving. They are designed to reduce the Japanese and European trade surpluses and rescue the dollar from its impending tumble. Temporarily, a wonderful bubble has been sustaining the US economy and, indeed, preserving the American president. Demand has been boosted by a Wall Street-based wealth effect (although this should point out that a not unconnected "poverty effect" is now engulfing much of the third world).

The US is becoming a massive debtor, however, and the overseas creditors, largely in Europe

and Japan, will have the final say in the end about how long the spree goes on. This week's fears of overheating affected the market, and the Federal Reserve might pluck up enough courage to raise rates next month, although it ducked Wednesday's opportunity.

We may wonder, however, whether there was something seriously wrong with the original development model. Emerging new technology was unleashed into a rapidly globalising world economy. In many emerging economies, imported know-how and imported capital were employed to potent effect. For years, Asian investment ran at twice the US level as a proportion of GDP. Excess supply and deflation may have been the inevitable consequences, and not just in the third world, either - thanks to better technology. Shell's North Sea crude oil production cost is only \$1.10 a barrel, one-third of what was produced back in 1990.

The hope must be that deflation will turn out to be associated with a falling prices boom like that of the 1930s rather than a 1990s-style falling prices bust. If so, a few growth sectors of the stock market will continue to boom, along with bonds. But the demographics of Japan and Europe do not give much excuse for optimism.

At any rate, if the global slump arrives, the Americans will have their excuses ready. It will all have been the fault of those who refused to jump on the gravy train, even though they were sent tickets.

For an interactive guide to personal finance, visit <http://www.FTQuicken.co.uk>

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■ Last week's preliminary results

Company	Sector	Year	Pre-tax profit (£m)	Bankers	Dividends
			per share (p)	per share (p)	per share (p)
AFM	EAME	Dec	162 (501)	143 (83)	(-)
Bally	Int'l	Oct	419 (433)	135 (14.55)	4.9 (7.5)
Becton Dickinson	Am	Dec	2.748 (21.01)	0.1 (1.29)	(-)
Charrington	Eng	Sep	1.570 (1.561)	3.6 (0.7)	0.5 (-)
Crest Nicholson	Cons	Oct	1.25 (24.01)	3.5 (22.01)	5.0 (3.0)
Dairy Crest	Int'l	Dec	780 (714)	17.41 (22.29)	17.41 (22.29)
Filings First	Am	Dec	2.75 (1.28)	0.8 (4.36)	(-)
Gardiner Watson	Am	Oct	242 (20.27)	17.84 (16.80)	5.8 (2.4)
GEC	Int'l	Oct	320 (872.0)	35.5 (65.5)	4.3 (11.5)
ICL	Chem	Oct	283 (618)	26.7 (55.7)	32 (32)
Imperial Tobacco	Am	Oct	8.055 (1.061)	0.12 (0.01)	(-)
Kemper River	Am	Sep	11.471 (1.041)	1.21 (0.37)	(-)
Meadow	Am+	Oct	4.581 (2.001)	2.73 (6.02)	(-)
Morgan Inc.	Int'l	Dec	120 (461.6)	15.5 (5.1)	16.5 (4.8)
Nightbright	Tele	Nov	2.5 (2.4)	4.7 (4.76)	2.1 (1.8)
Participle Fine Art	Secur	Oct	2.58 (3.57)	7.81 (11.88)	3.25 (5.0)
Reckitt & Sons	Spa	Sep	2.82 (2.26)	6.3 (8.1)	(-)
Stigmar Group	Spa	Oct	144 (16.2)	12.5 (23.3)	5.0 (4.2)
St Andrews	Int'l	Dec	35 (42.1)	1.34 (10.2)	10.5 (10.2)
Tangentronics	Int'l	Nov	82.8 (85.1)	2.4 (2.27)	2.4 (2.35)
Valeo	Eng	Jul	0.728 (1.22)	0.8 (1.0)	(-)
Ward Holdings	Cons	Oct	101.1 (4.05)	10.05 (7.05)	1.5 (2.6)

■ Last week's interim results

Company	Sector	Year to	Pre-tax profit (£m)	Market value (£m)	Dividends
			per share (p)	per share (p)	per share (p)
Avalon	Prop	Sep	6,427.1 (174.1)	- (-)	
BAA	Trans	Dec	440 (415)	- (-)	
Bolton Corp	Prop	Dec	2,234 (1,686)	- (-)	
Camel Laird	Eng	Dec	47 (1.33)	2.0 (1.4)	
City of London	Int'l	Sept	152.5 (1.32)	1.72 (1.8)	
CinCin Homes	Am	Sep	8,009 (1.00)	- (-)	
Durhamer	Am	Dec	0.371 (0.15)	- (-)	
Eurotel Electron	Dist	Nov	5.4 (0.61)	2.15 (2.15)	
Full Circle	BBM	Sep	6,653.0 (7.58)	- (-)	
Garmore Holdings	Int'l	Dec	105.9 (136.7)	0.4 (0.4)	
Guard (Int)	Int'l	Dec	44.65 (44.3)	1.925 (1.5)	
Hampshire Trust	Int'l	Dec	76.45 (58.28)	1.925 (1.5)	
Independent Energy	Prop	Sep	1,051.5 (1.52)	- (-)	
Inner Workings	Am	Dec	0.707 (0.442)	- (-)	
Langleys Foods	Prop	Oct	3,035.1 (3.27)	- (-)	
Langleys & Johnson	Am	Sep	0.378 (0.485)	- (-)	
M Currie Mongolian	Int'l	Nov	162.5 (228.8)	1.85 (1.8)	
Murray Financial	Am	Nov	0.124.1 (0.1)	- (-)	
Newell Smaller	Int'l	Dec	152.63 (189.9)	1.925 (1.25)	
Northumbrian	Dist	Dec	4.42 (4.26)	1.5 (1.2)	
Orion	Int'l	Dec	100.3 (102.8)	- (-)	
Old Monk	Am	Oct	0.214 (0.125)	- (-)	
Richards	HSgt	Mar	1.31 (0.52)	- (-)	
Sanderson	Med	Sep	1.47 (1.32)	0.15 (-)	
SCI Entertainment	Am	Dec	0.508 (0.08)	- (-)	
Southern Vectis	Am	Oct	1.3 (1.33)	- (-)	
Stevens Jigamida	Am	Sep	0.94 (0.9)	- (-)	
10 Group	Am	Sep	0.849 (-)	- (-)	
Tradepoint	Am	Dec	5.94 (4.77)	- (-)	
Taylor Resources	Int'l	Sep	1,593.1 (1,634.1)	- (-)	
Uno	Res	Nov	1.881 (1,028.1)	0.4 (1.85)	
Western Selection	Am	Dec	0.143 (0.115)	- (-)	
Whitbread of Chelsea	Res	Nov	0.284 (0.428)	1.15 (1.15)	

Figures in parentheses are for the corresponding period. Dividends are shown net per share, except where otherwise indicated. L=loss. ↑ Net asset value per share. £ Irish pounds and pence. * 3-month figures. \$ US dollars and cents. ● Previous year and figure. SS Net asset value. □ Pro forma results versus pro forma forecast. ○ 9-month figures. ♦ 13-month figures. ★ 15-month figures.

■ Results due next week

Company	Sector	Assessment	Last year	Dividend (£)	This year
			Interim	Total	Interim
FINAL DIVIDENDS					
British Smaller	Int'l	Thursday	1.0	-	-
Cartwright British Inc & Growth	Prop	Tuesday	-	-	-
Henderson TR Pacific	Int'l	Thursday	-	-	-
Im Business	BBM	Friday	0.975	-	-
Reuter	Med	Wednesday	3.4	-	-
Scottish American Inv.	Int'l	Wednesday	5.3	-	-
Shell	Oil	Thursday	2.75	-	-
RPS	Spa	Thursday	2.75	-	-
Toret	Spa	Friday	-	-	-
INTERIM DIVIDENDS					
Almac	Eng	Tuesday	-	-	-
Armitage Bros	Prop	Thursday	3.3	7.9	-
British Airways	Tree	Tuesday	4.7	16.5	5.1
BSkyB	Med	Wednesday	2.75	6.0	-
Epic	Am	Tuesday	-	-	-
IFC	Offs	Monday	2.5	7.45	-
JSS Software Tech	Am	Wednesday	-	-	-
PizzaExpress	BBM	Monday	1.05	4.25	-
Recurse	EAME	Monday	-	0.1	-
Stoves	HSgt	Tuesday	2.2	8.4	-

Dividends are shown net per share and are adjusted for any intervening scrip issue. Reports and accounts are not normally available until about six weeks after the board meeting to approve preliminary results. ♦♦ 1st quarter. ♦♦ 2nd quarter. * 3rd quarter. This list is not necessarily comprehensive since companies are no longer obliged to notify the Stock Exchange of imminent announcements.

■ Directors' share dealings

Transactions in own shares:

Source - 20th January 1999

Company	Sector	Shares	Value (£'000)	No. of directors
SALES				
Ryf Bank of Scotland	Bank	4,540	46,900	1
Richardson Foods	Food	380,000	228,000	1
Drew Scientific Gp	Health	100,000	77,000	1
Albany Investment	InvT	14,000	25,740	1
F & C Smaller Cos	InvT	20,000	33,200	1
Perpetual UK Small	InvT	11,000	30,380	1
Shireland United	LH&I	148,120	26,842	1
Redhouse Brothers	OH&F	14,000	77,700	2
Compo Hedges	Prop	50,000	103,500	1
Evans of Leeds	Prop	20,000	21,000	1
Environment Prop.	SSR	1,220,000	190,800	1
Tesco	Ref	723,167,267,000	2*	2*
PURCHASES				
SPP Inds	BBM	10,000	18,000	1
Pilkington	BBM	100,000	54,000	1
Ashford Group	Cos	25,000	45,750	1
FEA Holdings	Dir	170,000	65,200	1
United Overseas Grp	Dir	1,080,000	145,400	1
Chamberlin & Hill	Eng	10,000	18,000	1
Johnson Matthey	Eng	12,500	52,500	1
Loades PLC	Eng	20,000	58,000	1
Hawthorn	Prop	100,000	107,500	2
Richmond Foods	Food	183,000	105,000	2
Alnwick Furniture	Wood	50,000	100,000	1
Readicut	Wood	50,000	15,000	1
Allied Zurich	Ins	10,000	65,450	1
Lady In Leisure Gp	LH&I	445,300	445,300	3
Tempus Group	Med	50,000	100,000	1
Smith (David S)	PP&F	20,000	18,000	1
Great Portland Est	Prop	1,000,000	783,000	1
Aradisa Group	Int'l	30,000	48,800	3
Marks & Spencer	Ref&G	10,000	38,400	1

Companies must notify the Stock Exchange within five working days of a share transaction by a director. This list contains all transactions (read and ADRs), including exercises of options (*) if 100% subsequently sold, with a value over £10,000. Information released by the Stock Exchange. Shares traded are ordinary, unless otherwise stated. ** Share price.

Source: BARPA The Inside Track, Edinburgh, 0

FT WEEKEND

True Fiction / Paddy Linehan

On line to a mobile social life

She was a lovely, cute little thing with blonde hair dangling in wisps around her dimpled cheeks. She wore a smart, sharp fitted costume like air hostesses in the 1960s.

She giggled quite a bit. It wasn't the kind of giggle that diminished confidence. It was the kind of giggle that said: "You and I are on the same plane... we know what we know, tee hee hee." She was about half my age.

Mobile phones were her stock in trade. I had decided that I had to have one. I couldn't take the ignominy of being without any more. At meetings, in pubs, even in the street I had been increasingly relegated to playing second fiddle to phone friends.

I would just be warming up to a bright description of my latest achievements when a *brrr brrr* would interrupt, and a facial grimace indicate that I was to shut up. Humbling in itself, it was the precursor to an even greater wrench. It seemed that everyone,

except me, had interesting friends and a very busy life. I had to join up.

They had, she said, many "airtime tariff options". They have been designed around the way you plan to talk on your phone," she smiled. She waited for me to divulge how I planned to "talk on my phone" and, when there was no response, added: "Do you expect to use your phone more for incoming or outgoing calls?" I stalled again.

She moved in close and very slowly and deliberately traced an arc in the air with a pointed, painted index finger and brought it to rest on my breast bone. She smiled knowingly and, letting the finger slip down just two inches, brought my heart close to full stop.

"We don't have a lot of people to call us, do we?" she purred rhetorically. I contemplated cracking up and burying my head in her breast. She saw it coming and spinning around on a stiletto heel, said: "I have exactly the service you require."

Dimples had formed a "social back-up service". It is a small part of the black economy that is, she admits, lucrative. She claims it is also philanthropic.

The company she works for supplies the phone; she supplies the service. My problem, she assured me, was common among those getting into the mobile phone clique. They know no one calls mobile phone numbers. They are far too expensive.

She continued in a business-like fashion. "We supply the

hardware and software." The hardware consisted of a magnetised button which is attached to the mobile. The software consists of a Kensington flat full of female friends. The button sends signals to the girls regarding the whereabouts of their clients. Most important, it is sensitive to crowds. It doesn't bother you when you are alone and there is no one to impress, but get into company and it buzzes beautifully.

In the early stages, one of the girls actually calls you, talking animatedly. You use cue words that determine whether you want an important message or an hilariously funny one.

This initial service lasts for one week and is for the amateur who has learnt nothing of the skill of feigning reaction for

effect. In the second week the phone rings as before but instead of a live voice one gets a recording. During this week one must work hard at reacting. "Watch your audience and learn what impresses by way of facial expression."

In the third week you just get the ring but no voice. By then Dimples told me, if I didn't think I had mastered my pretend responses, I could revert to voice real or recorded. It was all up to me and how hard I worked at it. Most of her clients were able to manage with just the ring after three weeks.

She had other special services that she would like me to consider. "Our wake-up service is verrrry discreet. It activates only if it detects a partner. Then it buzzes and sends out an emergency message about important business to be attended to."

I hesitated about the desirability of such a call but she assured me that being wanted elsewhere made one very desirable. "And it becomes active only when our client and his/her partner have slipped into slumber," she added.

The hardware is, she reminded me with that enigmatic smile, very sensitive.

There is also a "disco service", in which the button, sensing the din, rings loudly enough to be measured on the Richter Scale and sends a message that can be heard above the music.

She had other special services that she would like me to consider. "Our wake-up service is verrrry discreet. It activates only if it detects a partner. Then

it buzzes and sends out an emergency message about important business to be attended to."

When it came to discussing the matter of payment for this service her mobile rang and she halted my questioning with the gentlest of gestures and a beautiful smile. She held her eye on me while she cooed and pursed her lips into the tiniest handset.

She laughed and then a trace of wonder creased her brow. Or was it worry? My admiration started to pump, ready to leap to the protection of my distressed damsel. I stepped closer to indicate my willingness to rescue her from her distressing calling.

She flipped the instrument closed and, transferring all her weight to one foot, raised the other behind her and, smiling towards me, explained: "You demonstration." After two weeks of service I should be able to perform as convincingly, she said.

I bought the phone. And the service. Now I'm busy trying to insinuate myself into the company, just to get those Kensington girls to give me a buzz.



Arcadia

Why whale-watching could go up the spout

The huge mammals are returning to South Africa's waters. But their resurgence could be hampered by over-eager tourists. Victor Mallet reports



No one talked about whales when I lived in Cape Town in the mid-1980s. Political violence and the collapse of apartheid dominated conversations then, and anyway whales were only occasionally spotted off the South African coast.

These days they cannot be ignored; there are hundreds of them, within sight and sometimes within a few metres of the shore, spouting, leaping, splashing, lolling around, feeding their calves and probably mating.

The recovery of the southern right whale as they migrate from the cold south to calve and nurse their young in South African waters between June and December – is one of the biggest successes of modern conservation, and it has spawned a tourist industry along the coast.

It is only in the past decade that the old port of Hermanus east of Cape Town, for example, has started marketing itself as the whale-watching centre and

naming everything in the town, even wines, after the 50-tonne animals wallowing in the bay. Only recently have there been enough whales. "In the 1970s you couldn't find anything in Hermanus called 'whale,'" says Peter Best of the University of Pretoria's Mammal Research Institute, who has studied the animals for the past three decades. "Now they're calling everything 'whale'."

Southern right whales – so-called because their slow movements and their abundant blubber and whalebone made them the "right" whale to catch – were once hunted to the verge of extinction. It is thought that the population visiting southern Africa numbered about 20,000 in 1780, of which 12,000 were killed by whalers before 1825.

Modern hunting methods made matters worse. By the time whales received international protection in the 1930s there were probably fewer than 100 southern rights left out of those that had once visited Africa in abundance.

For all their huge size and their habit of coming so close to shore, surprisingly little is known about the whales. But the

facts and figures we do have – many of them deduced from studies of the northern right whales, which may or not be a different species (or two) – are startling.

Male right whales, which seek to perpetuate their genes by producing more sperm than their rivals, have testicles that weigh as much as 500kg and two-metre penises. Calves, about six metres long at birth, are said to consume 600 litres of their mothers' milk each day. Adults reach about 14 metres in length and can weigh nearly 60 tonnes.

The sexual habits of the whales are little understood, but it seems that a group of excited males will surround a female, roll their bodies caressingly over her, wave their flippers and generally try to attract her attention. If no female is available, desperate males have been known to try to mate with each other. "They even try it with the calves," says Best.

A still greater challenge will be to control the fast-growing whale-watching industry, which includes boat trips, walking tours and the 900-km "Cape Whale

Route" sponsored by MTN, a local mobile telephone company. Conflicts between humans – with their seaplanes, motorboats, jetskis and yachts – and the growing number of whales are already apparent.

In some bays it is almost impossible to obey a ban on approaching closer than 300 metres to a whale because there are so many. "Recreational boat users are complaining now that they can't even take their boats out," says Ken Findlay of the University of Cape Town's Centre for Marine Studies, who helped to launch whale-watching in South Africa with walking tours along the shore.

Seeking to regulate what threatens to become a chaotic free-for-all, the government

recently issued a dozen licences, allowing boats to take whale-watchers close to the whales. In terms of their licence they have to become an honorary fisheries inspector and they also have a strong incentive to look after the resource," says Findlay.

Without such measures, there is a danger that over-enthusiastic tourists will disturb the whales that have brought so much enjoyment – and money – to the country's south coast in the past 10 years. That would be a pity, because it would set back the recovery of a population of remarkable animals; even if all goes well, it will take several decades before the southern right whales can attain the glorious abundance of the days before people started killing them.

In the shadow of Egypt's Great Pyramid a battle is taking place between past and present. The prize is a narrow, 3km long strip of land. It is a prize worth claiming. For next to this land, at the foot of the Giza plateau, stand the famous three pyramids.

For generations, the fortunes of the small town of Nazlet el-Samman and the monuments have been linked; the clans who live there helped to build Egypt's £811.5bn (£2.1bn) tourist industry – the country's single biggest source of foreign currency.

Clan names such as el-Gabry, Khattab, A'Sha'ar, el-Helw and Fayed are synonymous with tourism. Their members are numbered among the humble camel riders, horsemen, souvenir shopkeepers as well as travel agents and tour operators.

Now the government wants to evict them, citing overcrowding and pollution. Giza's provincial government is unsure of the figures but an unofficial estimate puts Nazlet el-Samman's population at about 20,000, having grown from about 5,000 in the early 1980s.

The residents claim that the real motive for eviction is envy of their business success. This privately owned land offers valuable

tourist potential but draconian building restrictions have been imposed by the provincial government.

Unlicensed buildings are demolished and residents face imprisonment if they extend or repair their homes. This is done in the name of conservation but people fear bigger plans exist that could force them out.

Such measures come against a background of uncontrolled building in greater Cairo over the past two decades as rural migration and population growth pushed the population to nearly 12m officially. Unofficial estimates range between 18m and 22m. Giza, once physically separate, now merges into the sprawl.

It is government policy to entice people into new towns. The overspill from Giza should have gone to 6th October City established in 1981 in the desert south-west of Giza. The target is to have 1.5m residents there by

2015. Today there are 120,000. There are also building restrictions and a ban on the sale of farmland in the Giza region as a whole. "My family has a buyer willing to pay £10m for land but we can't sell," complains Ahmed, a young civil engineer.

"What does the government expect us to do? Twenty-five years ago they built a highway through our land and we haven't been compensated yet."

Nazlet el-Samman, however, is unlike neighbouring parts of Giza. The area was just desert and was routinely subject to partial flooding by Nile waters when people first settled there about 600 years ago.

We are trying to stop the growth of Nazlet el-Samman in order to conserve the monuments," says Mahr el-Gendy, Giza's governor.

"There is a plan to evacuate the area because the area has been designated for the building curbs were once lifted by former prime minister Fuad Mohadeen. But in 1990, el-

Gendy's predecessor reversed this decision. Ghorab questions how a provincial governor can overturn a prime minister's ruling.

Under a governor's powers, this decree should have been effective for just one year. It is illegal. This land is private property. People have built upward – not spread beyond their legal boundaries. The governor said that Nazlet el-Samman obstructed the view of the pyramids.

He envisages a tourist centre with shops and the relocation of camel and horse stables, along with site access, to the south west of the plateau. To this end Unesco, the custodian of world heritage sites, is sending an adviser to the Egyptian government at the end of this month.

People in Nazlet el-Samman blame their troubles on Zahi Hawass, director of pyramids at the Supreme Council for Antiquities. They claim that he has exhorted the ministry of culture to pressure local government into taking the land into state control for development schemes.

Hawass has been excavating ancient workers' settlements

McDonald's there (actually a Pizza Hut/KFC opposite the Sphinx). The sight is very ugly. This is one of the Seven Wonders of the World. It is important that the village is moved so that a shopping centre for tourists can be made there," says Hawass.

"Zahi Hawass hates us," says Yusuf, a gift shop owner. "I'm not going to leave my house for his project. This is my home."

Musa, a tour guide, is also defiant. "The government should treat us like people – not cattle. There has been no compensation. Of course, I believe they should be looked after but the government should balance the needs of our history with the needs of the people who live here now."

"If we know what the plans were we would modify our buildings. But when we ask, there are no plans. They just want to throw the people out of Nazlet el-Samman and demolish it."

"People are now working together on buildings. They are responding to restrictions by building more durable constructions. It is a fight."

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